Saturday Review

of Literature

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TRADE Winds

IF JOHN GUNTHER knows what's good for him, he won't return to the Ozarks in a hurry. Folks in those parts who dipped into his "Inside U.S.A." don't like the brush-off he gave them. Terming the region "The Poor White Trash Citadel of America," he added insult to injury by quoting a piece written way back in 1924: "Ozarkians are a highland race that loves solitude but scorns comfort and luxury. . . . The ones who colonized Pike County made the name 'piker' notorious as denoting a fellow of feeble wit and feeble initiative."

"Mr. Gunther," scoffed a patron of the cozy Kentwood Arms Hotel in Springfield, "has been conditioned by too many hillbilly cartoons in *Esquire*. Besides, Pike County has nothing to do with the Ozarks. It's clear up at the other end of Missouri!" He continued, "I hope *you* have an open mind. You must be the first publisher who's come here in twenty years to see our folks for himself. We read books here just like anybody else. I bet there's been more copies of Harold Bell Wright's 'Shepherd of the Hills' sold in my home town of Shell Knob in the past year than in the whole city of New York! And we're mighty tired of that Judy Canova brand of humor about sorghum, feuding, and outhouses. Here's a joke I know is brand new straight from Shell Knob for your next collection. Fellow down there named Matt Kissinger. He didn't like the sound of it so he changed it to Richie. Couple of weeks later he changed it again to McCann, and when that didn't suit, he shifted once more to Wilson. Now every time we see him we start whistling, 'I Wonder Who's Kissinger Now.' Get it?" I told him I got it. . . .

THE PEOPLE WHO TOOK IT upon themselves to entertain me for my week end in the Ozarks couldn't possibly have been nicer. Margaret and Porter Lucas came sixty miles to meet me at the airport of Joplin, devoted the rest of the day to driving me through the hills (the tallest "mountain" in the range is only 2,300 feet high), and wound up with a rollicking party at their home in Crane, where, to make things easy for me, all the other guests wore badges giving their names, occupations, and outstanding characteristics. Some of the names are pretty fancy in those parts. One girl was called Zuma, one Firl. Another guest hailed from the thriving metropolis of Nellie's Apron. Other towns in the neighborhood are named Impo, Zinc, Calico Rock, Yellville, and Blue Eye, where, believe it or not, the school was closed last year by an epidemic of pinkeye. . . . If you'd like to know the make of "hillbilly jalopy" that transported me to Springfield, it was a sleek 1949 Cadillac, owned and operated by Dr. Wallis Smith, newly elected president of the Missouri Medical Association. There was only one ticklish moment —when I remarked that the Truman Health Program might do a lot for the almost unbelievably poor hill people (their average income is less than $300 a year!). It developed that Dr. Smith took a very dim view of "socialized medicine"—induced, perhaps, by studying the subject exclusively through a pair of Fishbeinoculars. "I read about one man in England," he chortled, "who wouldn't even accept a free set of dentures he was entitled to under the health scheme. He told them, 'Your Labor Government isn't going to get its teeth into *me*.' A true Missourian couldn't have put it more neatly!" . . .

THE TWO GREAT CITIES OF MISSOURI —St. Louis and Kansas City—have little in common with the rest of the state. They are regarded with the same suspicion and genuine dislike that upstaters in New York reserve for Manhattan. To people south of "K.C." and "Saint Loo," the crowning glory of Missouri is the School of the Ozarks, a unique institution whose 250 students are boys and girls "without a penny in their pockets, with no other chance for education, but with ambition to be kindled, and a dream in their hearts." Its guiding genius, a wonderful man named R. M. Good, who looks, acts, and talks like Will Rogers, has seen this school grow from an abstract idea to a two-million-dollar plant, with modern dormitories, a machine shop, canning factory, stone quarry, 400-acre farm, and one of the finest herds of prize Jersey cattle in the world.

Most of the students of the School of the Ozarks come from one-room shacks that house families of nine

"It took me ten years to discover I had no talent for writing, but by that time I was so famous I couldn't stop."

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to fifteen. They trudge on foot over the mountains for miles to reach the school. Some of them have never seen an electric light or a knife and fork before they get there. Once arrived, they receive not only an elementary and high-school education, but learn to perform every task necessary to keep the school plant in operation. The girls do all the cooking and housekeeping. The boys quarry the stones, build, paint, and repair the buildings, and run the printing plant. Together, boys and girls run the cannery, the dairy, and the farm. To date the school has graduated 963 students. Not one of them has failed. Sixty-two married couples met first on the school grounds. Dr. Good keeps a minute record of every graduate's career. Many are now prosperous farmers or lawyers or doctors. I think his own favorite is Clint McDade, who made millions by becoming, of all things, the world's leading grower of orchids. McDade says he can fly his own plane today from his home in Chattanooga to one of his plantations in Hawaii in less time than it used to take him to go from his home to the school. On his last visit he brought orchids to the kids. "Of course, none of them ever had seen an orchid before," says Dr. Good. "And for that matter, neither had I."

The School of the Ozarks exists on faith. It has no subsidy from town or state. Nobody knows how next month's bills are going to be met. "God always takes care of us," Dr. Good told me. Donations arrive in every mail from all over the country. The farm was bought for $5,000, for instance, when the treasury was absolutely bare. The very next day a lady phoned and said, "I'll give you $5,000 if you tell me you've got a special use for it." Visitors, faculty, and students all eat together. A man and his wife stopped by for a meal one evening. "Your dining room is inadequate," he observed. "How much would it take to put up a new one?" "The kind of dining hall, kitchen, and bakery I want here," said Dr. Good, "would cost $100,000." The man

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said nothing, but two days later he called up from St. Louis. "My wife and I haven't been able to sleep since we left you," he said. "We keep thinking of all we've got, and then we think of what you are doing for those kids. I'm sending you a certified check for $100,000. Go start your new dining room!" . . . The evening I dined in that new room, the boys were painting it. "That's buffalo meat you're eating," remarked Graham Clark, the dynamic vice president of the school. I'm glad he told me. Buffalo meat is worth traveling 500 miles to avoid. It reminded me of a comment Charlie Morton once made in a Boston rathskeller: "This beef is so tough I can't even stick my fork in the gravy!" . . .

The prize Jersey herd is a gift of the school's patron saint, Wilkins

Hyer, of the J. C. Penney Corporation. Three of the bulls alone are worth $68,000 on the hoof. Master Dairyman John Fawcett took me around the barns. "We're going to do some artificial inseminating," he said casually. "Want to watch?" The proposition made me vaguely uneasy, but the casual unconcern of several twelve-year-olds who came along to help shamed me into silent assent. When the prize bull was being led away, I asked, "Is that all you need to service a cow?" "*A* cow," exclaimed Fawcett. "*Five hundred* cows." I addressed my next question to one of the twelve-year-olds. "How long does it take a cow to produce a calf?" I asked in a low and diffident voice. He answered very loudly, "Nine months, just like a human being, you big sap!" . . . There are lots of things a city kid never learns.

One hundred and twenty-five boys and 125 girls are only a fraction of the kids who want to get into the School of the Ozarks and who probably will never get a formal education if they don't. Dr. Good hopes to double the enrollment in the years to come. Maybe you'd like to hear more about his remarkable experiment. An inquiry addressed to R. M. Good, Point Lookout, Missouri, will bring an immediate reply. . . .

I AM PUTTY IN THE HANDS OF a hard-driving female of the executive type. In the days of war-bond tours, I jumped every time Agnella Gunn snapped her whip. In Shreveport, Bess Vaughan hustled me about until my tongue was hanging out. But in Springfield, Missouri, I met the queen bee of them all in the person of a vest-pocket Clare Boothe Luce named Elisabeth Ingram. The program that Liz, aided and abetted by Margaret Lucas, had lined up for me sounds so improbable on paper that I don't dare reprint it. Highlights, however, were an interview with a crackerjack newspaper gal named Docia Karrell, lunch with the glamourous Hoover clan, an hour with a hundred students at Drury College, and a visit to May Kennedy McCord, who sang some wonderful ballads for me, with lyrics that would have caused the vice presidents of six radio chains to faint on the spot. "Did you ever hear Burl Ives sing?" I asked her. "Hear him?" roared May (according to Who's Who, she's seventy). "Who do you think taught him?"

By the time the Lucases took me to the railroad station, I felt I was leaving behind a score of old, old friends. Some of the people I had met there may have been a trifle insular in their prejudices, but they couldn't have been nicer or more hospitable. At Brown's Book Store, for instance, Mr. Hatfield had filled his entire window with Random House and Modern Library books in honor of my coming. I didn't notice the display until I was on my way out. When I went back to thank him, he said, "We were hoping you'd notice!" Imagine a total stranger not only going to all that bother, but never even calling attention to the fact! Mr. Hatfield made me feel good all over!

BEFORE BOARDING THE FRISCO streamliner for St. Louis somebody told me, "We hope for your sake China Boy isn't at the throttle tonight!" China Boy, it developed, owed his picturesque title to the fact that every time he stopped a train, all the china in the dining car broke. I must have missed him. Maybe he gravitated in the natural course of events to the Pennsylvania! Some of the comments I have received anent that road will be reprinted here later. . . .

In St. Louis I was entertained by Lillian Friedman, bright, shining star of the Stix, Baer & Fuller book department, and in Columbus by Mrs. Teeter and Pam Atkinson of the Lazarus Company. These ladies rate a lot more space, and will get it in due course. For the moment, all I know is I'm happy to be home, and almost as tired of this travelogue as you must be! —BENNETT CERF.

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The Saturday Review of Literature

The Case Against Roots

WYNDHAM LEWIS

Wyndham Lewis

THERE is something that I have never seen seriously challenged: namely, the notion that to *have roots* (as if one were a vegetable or a plant) is a good thing for a man: that to be *rootless* is a bad thing for a man.

The exact contrary, of course, is the case. To be rooted like a tree to one spot, or at best to be tethered like a goat to one small area, is not a destiny in itself at all desirable. It is a matter of surprise that the bluff of the *rooted* boys has never been called—I mean radically so, by a plain statement of the excellence of what is the opposite of rootedness.

Since we have with us, in my own person, as good an illustration as can be found, I will take myself. I am just as much at home, if not more so, in Casablanca as in Kensington; feel in no way strange in Barcelona—like equally Paris, London, or New York. I feel most at home in the United States, not because it is intrinsically a more interesting country, but because no one really belongs there any more than I do. We are all there together in its wholly excellent vacuum.

The sight of the *root* depresses me; and I know in that country that everyone has left his roots over in Poland or Ireland, in Italy or in Russia, so we are all floating around in a rootless Elysium.

Never having been in the West, I cannot say what it feels like to be there. But in the Midwest and East, where I have lived, it feels just grand to be drifting around in a sea of Poles, Lithuanians, Irish, Italians, Negroes, Portuguese, French, and Indians. It is the kind of disembodied feeling that I like.

But to be perfectly earnest. No American worth his salt should go looking around for a root. I advance this in all modesty as a not unreasonable opinion. For is not that tantamount to giving up the most conspicuous advantage of being American, which is surely to have turned one's back on race, caste, and all that pertains to the rooted state?

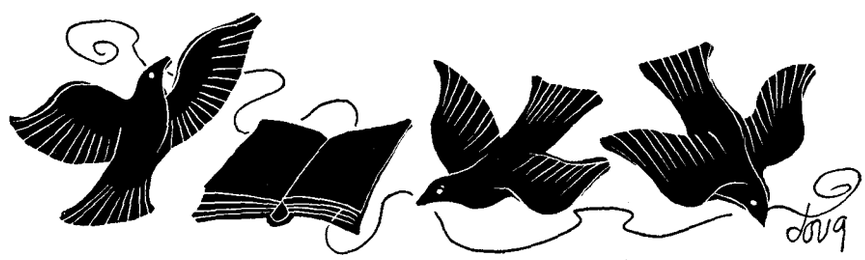
American citizenship is in a different category from any other citizenship. The ceremony of initiation that accompanies the acquisition of citizenship is of a peculiarly solemn character suggestive of something more (as indeed it is) than a mere transference of allegiance from one government to another. The rite is of a religious order: in becoming an American, it is not a nationality that is being assumed, but a new way of life, universal and all-inclusive in its very postulates: in a New World in which a new type of man is destined to appear.

Tolstoy had much to say about patriotism; it bore the imprint of his massive common sense, and abhorrence of the tricks by which men are enslaved. In order to demonstrate what becoming American is *not* (I mean ideally, of course, and historically), I will quote a passage from "Christianity and Patriotism," an essay wherein Tolstoy is vigorously engaged in the task of attempting to unseal people's eyes. The myth of the starry-eyed Russian peasant and his veneration for the "little father" and so on is his target.

> They talk of the love of the Russian masses [he writes] for their faith, their Czar, and their Government, and yet there will not be found one commune of peasants in the whole of Russia which would hesitate for a moment which of the two places to choose for colonization—(1) Russia, with the Czar, the little father as they write in books, and with the Holy Orthodox Faith, in its adored country, but with *less* and *worse* land, or (2) without the little father, the white Czar, and without the Orthodox Faith, somewhere outside of Russia, in Prussia, China, Turkey, Austria, but *with some greater and better advantages*.... For every Russian peasant the question as to what government he will be under (since he knows that, no matter under what government he may be, he will be fleeced just the same) has incomparably less meaning than the question as to whether, I will not say the water is good, but as to whether the clay is soft and as to whether there will be a good cabbage crop.

NO ONE, I hope, would be so determined an idealist as to deny that there are *any* immigrants to the USA who have shifted themselves over there for precisely the reason described by Tolstoy in the above passage: in the pleasurable expectation of better conditions of life, better wages, less interference, less war. But should one of these immigrants suddenly take it into his head, in later years, to *leave* the New World, then there would, I believe, be something more difficult to dispense with than the Czar, the little father, or the Orthodox Faith to deter him.

How shall we define this? It is very different from pious attachment to the soil, which scarcely exists in America, or to historic tradition. No: it is attachment to the *absence* of these things. It is attachment, I should say, to a slightly happy-go-



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lucky vacuum, in which the ego feels itself free. It is, it seems to me, something like the refreshing anonymity of a great city, compared with the oppressive opposite of that invariably to be found in the village. Everything that is obnoxious in the family is encountered in the latter: all that man gains by escape from the family is offered by the former. The United States is full of people who have escaped from their families, figuratively.

"Freedom and irresponsibility are commutative terms": such is a definition of freedom proposed by me in a book published in 1926. The more he is beset by duty, the less free a man is. I am not saying the more happy he is, nor would I resist the rejoinder that you can have too much of a good thing. Here I am doing my best to define, wherever it leads, something I have constantly felt in that country, as I have lived in its cities. London is a village compared with New York. One has a most pleasant disembodied sensation, as I have remarked, among all those herds of Italians, Germans, Jews, Irish, Negroes. You at last are *in the world,* instead of just in a nation.

There are few friendships in America such as exist in Europe. Every man is *a little bit* your friend, and will call you Bill or Fred or Jim after he has known you half an hour. But you will never become *his* Bill: there are too many other Bills for that. Friendship is a responsibility!

I am quite serious when I say that this is what heaven must be like—agreeably inhuman, naturally; a rootless, irresponsible city (for everyone is agreed that heaven is a city, so what the confirmed agriculturist will do it is difficult to see), where the spirit is released from all the too-close contacts with other people (others who get "in your hair," or are all the time "underfoot") but where everything is superficially fraternal.

NOW having analyzed something I have invariably felt all about me, while in America, I will return to the citizen making up his mind to emigrate *out* of it. Where he would be going there would be no Americanism—there would be something far more solid; there would be friendships that chain down—a marriage that was, of all things, a friendship as well—there would be tradition telling you it "wasn't done," or that it *was*—saddling you with a thousand duties and obligations. Would he like all that after his prolonged immersion in this sort of ether? He would not.

My definition of freedom ("freedom and irresponsibility are commutative terms") would have, no doubt, to the dutiful ear, equivocal implications, perhaps sound like invitations to licence. My "rootless Elysium" likewise would have a lawless sound: would appear to be located in an equivocal region, not subject to the moral law.

But let us, to the best of our ability, challenge the ascetic prejudice, which, if you analyze it, would ultimately be seen to deny all real freedom to anybody. Let us, if anything, go too far in the other direction, rather than surrender to that prejudice.

Then the standards that enthrone duty at the expense of the happiness of the individual belong essentially to fiercely competitive systems. They are standards proper to a state of chronic emergency; which is descriptive of our modern societies, forever eyeing a neighbor known to be subject to accesses of homicidal mania and who does not disguise the fact—far from it—that he has a revolver in his pocket. The emphasis upon duty, to the exclusion of all the epicurean values, is the natural result of such conditions.

America, however, is outside that area where nations are crowded up against each other, groups of rival diplomats engaged in that apparently absorbing game in which our lives and fortunes are the stakes. Until quite recently, rather, this has been the case: the air-age has closed up the ocean gaps. Then Americans are in the main people who have escaped, or whose ancestors escaped, from the rigors experienced in such societies as ours. They could at last relax somewhat, were able to put down their guards and be at peace, enjoy a freedom from interference they had never known up till then. They could discard the major part of duties and obligations, since what had dictated their imposition had been left behind. The Puritans, the Huguenots, the *émigrés* of '48—whether politics or religion had driven them out of their native land—all moved *outside,* out of the area of great pressure, into an area where the pressure was lifted from them and they could breathe freely. They would suddenly have the sensation of walking on air, of having been delivered of an incubus. For millions of people America has been as near heaven as they will ever get. If it did not go on being heaven, it always remained different from any other place.

Was this flight to America (a sort of suicide, as the nationalist would see it) immoral: a flight from Duty? The refugee blackens his motherland by the mere act of leaving it in this very pointed way.

Criticism is always involved in flight, from a country as from a wife; but it was usually from what they regarded as the wrong kind of duties and allegiances that men effected their escape. William Blake, for instance, typifies the spirit in which men have usually passed over into this great international sanctuary. His friend Tom Paine had gone there, and Blake, at a certain moment, was preparing to pass out through the "Western Gates," as he called them. Here is the poem "Thames and Ohio," in which he gave expression to his discontents, and his expectations of a better life:

Though born on the cheating banks
of Thames,
Though his waters bathed my infant
limbs,
The Ohio shall wash his stains from
me;
I was born a slave, but I go to be free.

THAT is what they all have said—"I go to be free." And America is the place in which all these dreams have foregathered. Is it surprising that occasionally in the air one thinks that one detects something so far not met with; the electric intoxication of the air breathed by prisoners set free? The American air is conditioned by these immigrant multitudes, hollow with the great *ouf!* with which they have turned their back upon the European world.

(I ought, perhaps, to say that *our* America, at the opening of what has been called the "atomic age," is not any longer across the seas. Instead, it is a time, not a place: namely, the cosmic era which lies beyond the ruin and disintegration of atomic war.)

To turn back for a moment to the propaganda of *rootedness*: most of it emanates from governments, by the agency of their newspaper press and other channels, emotional jingo purpose behind it. They desire a sedentary population, for the same reason that feudal lords wanted to be able to put their hand on their personal militia.

But the moment you get rid of the "sovereign state," you will hear no more about "roots." Cosmopolitan values will displace immediately the "root." An authentic world government would have the desired effect, though that is only a first step, and a full world society is necessary. Then there would be no further inducement to keep people fixed to one spot, nor to promote romantic values regarding their hereditary fixity. . . .

So glorification of rootedness is bound up with conditions which have at last, as might have been foreseen, reduced us to a bankrupt slum—which is what the Socialist Govern-

(Continued on page 32)

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Nature. *Some months ago we observed that most of the classic works on nature were written by men who lived within strolling distance of the country, while the best contemporary books come from the pens of citymen, whose delight in woods, water, and wildlife is magnified by the fact that their horizon is normally circumscribed by sidewalks. The new books reviewed below are cogent illustrations. Richard Jeffries, the nineteenth-century Britisher, whose classic "The Old House at Coate" was recently republished, was a countryman. But Lewis Gannett and Joseph Krutch, the authors of "Cream Hill" and "The Twelve Seasons," spend their working hours in New York City and relish nature's charms during Connecticut weekends and vacations. . . . In "The City of the Bees" Frank S. Stuart undertakes what Maurice Maeterlinck accomplished so notably in "The Life of the Bee," but his book falls far short.*

Pondering the Good and Rural Life

CREAM HILL: Discoveries of a Weekend Countryman. By Lewis Gannett. New York: The Viking Press. 1949. 191 *pp.* $3.50.

THE TWELVE SEASONS: A Perpetual Calendar for the Country. By Joseph Wood Krutch. New York: William Sloane Assoc. 1949. 187 *pp.* $3.

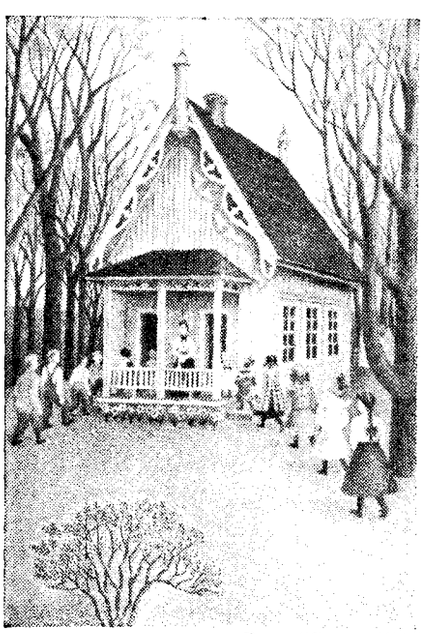
Reviewed by LOUIS J. HALLE, JR.

MR. GANNETT, in addition to his distinction as a book reviewer, stands as the representative of a new human type that first appeared about a quarter century ago. This *homo novus*, having become firmly established, it is fitting that we should now have his chronicle and life history. Note that Mr. Gannett calls his book the "discoveries" of a Weekend Countryman. The Weekend Countryman is, of course, the Weekday Cityman who has discovered the country.

The type is best known as it extends itself, weekends, from New York City into Connecticut. A friend of mine who was a little boy some thirty years ago recalls how, at the beginning of summer, his parents would put him on a train at Grand Central Terminal, with tearful farewells and *bon-voyage* packages, and dispatch him to northern Westchester County, fifty miles away. During the summer he had to write them once a week, and at the end of summer they met his train in New York with the usual exclamations about how he had grown and how brown he was. He recalls this especially when, nowadays, he finds himself going out there for lunch and coming back in the afternoon. This is the same revolution that produced the Weekend Countryman.

When the Gannetts of New York acquired Cream Hill a quarter century ago they had no thought of country weekends. In northwestern Connecticut (a three-day horseback ride from New Haven in the eighteenth century), it was to be a place for long summer vacations only. In the course of time "without our quite realizing the change it became an all-year-round weekend home. Weekends long ago became more important to us than summers. The 'summer place' idea is obsolete."

The historical interest of Cream Hill is not neglected by Mr. Gannett in this account of all the elements that entered into his new life. He has delved into the history of the first settlement, of the local families, and of the township. It was only after he moved there that he stumbled upon the fact that his great-great-grandfather, a president of Yale College, had bought property in the same town 162 years earlier. The ancestor, like the descendant, was a vegetable gardener and left records of his gardening that compare and contrast with the log of the Gannetts, who also garden for wild and tame flowers. The Weekend Countryman still has a half-incredulous delight at finding how things grow out of the ground.



—From "Cream Hill."

Mr. Gannett, it should be said, is distinguished among his fellows by the range of knowledge that he betrays (rather than displays), and this makes his writing continuously interesting. He knows the wild flowers and their history—which kinds could be found in his ancestor's day and which have since been naturalized. He knows the birds, when they arrive and depart, their songs, what they look like—and not just from books he has reviewed. His esoteric lore includes even the history of hirsute facial adornments through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, with statistics on the varying percentage of beavers in the Cabinets of successive Presidents, and he relates all this to the history of his weekend town, showing that it is not so independent as it thinks. It may vote Republican in a Democratic year, but facial ornamentation is something else.

Mr. Gannett writes easily, informally, and unpretentiously, as if conversing with a like-minded friend. He obviously does not regard the reader as a stranger, but makes him feel quite welcome at Cream Hill. I could easily believe I had been the Gannetts' guest there in all seasons, that I had just come from another weekend, and that I ought to be writing a bread-and-butter letter instead of a review.

I cannot omit mention of the meals at Cream Hill, which have their adventurous side. If you did not know it at the time, the Gannetts may tell you afterwards that the "asparagus" you just ate was really milkweed. And I cannot close without a word in appreciation of Ruth Gannett's lithographs. There is one of a skunk cabbage—fleshy, alive, and beautiful—that I wish I had framed on my wall. Others, too, add to the delight of these Cream Hill weekends.

Altogether, I had a grand time. Many thanks for everything.

* * *

WHAT best distinguishes man, perhaps, from the lower animals is the breadth of the world he inhabits. The earthworm lives in the present and knows his yard of sod; but we men may project ourselves millions

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of years into time and millions of light-years into space. We vary in this, to be sure, according to the capacity and cultivation of our minds. Joseph Wood Krutch, as revealed in "The Twelve Seasons," is one of the elite who inhabit the universe.

He has hitherto been best known to the reading public as a drama critic for *The Nation*, and a good one. "The good critic," said Anatole France, "is he who narrates the adventures of his soul among masterpieces." Now, in this personal essay of a countryman, Dr. Krutch is still the good critic, but this time the dramatic masterpiece is not "Macbeth" or "Strange Interlude." It is The Universe, in the twelve acts of the Gregorian version, which concludes with the notation "da capo."

Dr. Krutch might have contented himself with describing what occurs in each act as seen at his country home in Connecticut: snow, migration, autumn colors, and so forth. But if that had been all, the Universe would have escaped him, for it is not so much in the raw phenomena as in the mind that observes them and asks their meaning. The "good critic" is a creator. Almost everyone who visits Walden for the first time is surprised to find such an ordinary pond and such scrubby w o o d s. Yet, seen through Thoreau's eyes, no California real estate compares to it.

The delight that the reader has in these pages is delight in watching the exercise of its freedom by a speculative mind to which education has given wings. It is something like the delight with which one watches the swallow describing distance or the hawk circling into space. Take the observation in May of the unimpressive beetle called Meloë. Of the ten or twelve thousand eggs that she lays, only the two (on the average) for which a series of most improbable coincidences occurs ever produce finished beetles. The immediate larval products of the eggs must find themselves close enough to some flying insect to grab on; but that is no good unless the flying insect, by a second improbable coincidence, turns out to be a mason bee of the genus Antho-

—*Dan Weiner.*

THE AUTHOR OF "CREAM HILL": "There are always more books I want to read than I get around to," says Lewis Gannett, who has gotten around to 400 per annum since 1931 as daily reviewer for the *New York H e r a l d T r i b u n e*. A friendly, white-haired man with a nicotine-tinted moustache, he dismisses any awe with shirt-sleeved candor. Most books can be read in three hours (by him), but it takes somewhat longer to check related references and write the column "Books and Things"—one of Gotham's soundest literary scales. "A very considerable element of the job is reporting, with a little criticism thrown in. You get used to doing it in short measure."

And you give up trying to spot literary trends, about which, he observes, "people talk a lot of nonsense. You can see a trend in retrospect, but every time I have tried to predict one I've found I was very wrong later. When one book about a subject is a success, others follow—not because authors copy each other but because publishers jump on the bandwagon. Nobody thought a book on China would sell until Pearl Buck did one."

He began reviewing books occasionally for *The Nation* while variously associate editor, foreign correspondent, and business manager from 1919-28, when "a long leap" to the *Tribune* landed him among the publishers' complimentary copies—at first only three days a week. It was something he never intended to do. As a boy in Rochester, N. Y., he was expected to take a Unitarian pulpit in the tradition of a half dozen Yankee progenitors. Instead, he toyed in turn with farming in Canada, biology at Harvard, and philosophy, in which he was graduated *magna cum laude*. He studied economics in Germany, took his MA in Cambridge, then about-faced for the *New York World* as reporter and rewrite man. He went to France in 1917 with a Quaker relief unit, ended up covering the peace conference for *The Survey*.

In 1930 he translated Hjalmar Schacht's "The End of Reparations"; in 1934 the first of several transcontinental tours inspired "Sweet Land." He has not immortalized his experiences as World War II correspondent, although he has done articles on everything from road signs to race prejudices. The possibilities of another book are vague. "This is a job that takes most of what you've got," he admits after all.

THE AUTHOR OF "THE TWELVE SEASONS": Twenty years ago Joseph Wood Krutch's "The Modern Temper" earned him a reputation for lank gloom. "I am used to this business of being regarded as unhappy," he says somewhat unhappily. "I am not. People know so little about happiness outside of diversions that when they see it they think it's melancholy." Any way you look at it, Mr. Krutch has had ample diversion assessing plays for *The Nation* off and on since 1924. It's ridiculous, he thinks, to sigh about the dying drama. "How many good plays do you expect in a season?"

Concurrently, he has taught English at Columbia, Brooklyn Polytechnic, and Vassar, lectured at the New School for Social Research, and is now Brander Matthews Professor of Dramatic Literature on Morningside Heights. While attending the University of Tennessee he was interested in mathematics, but Shaw's "Man and Superman" converted him to belles-lettres. There is a tendency, he feels, to exaggerate the influence of social conditions on writing. "Take the case of Shakespeare. The really interesting point is not why Shakespeare was an Elizabethan, but why all Elizabethans weren't Shakespeares." He has no doubt that Shakespeare was Shakespeare.

On the campus, as elsewhere, he believes in freedom from censorship up to the last practicable limit—a strong anti-Communist bias notwithstanding. "Although my prejudices might keep me from jumping to the defense of a Communist, I am very disinclined to persecute an opinion. If it is necessary to persecute an opinion, then the society in which it is necessary has become a sad and sorry one."

During his last sabbatical he wrote "Samuel Johnson"; he plans to spend his next, a year hence, in the Southwest writing, perhaps, about a year in the desert. Besides the plays of Congreve and O'Neill (about whom he wrote for the "Literary History of the United States"), he has edited an English translation of Proust and contributed to several anthologies. His "Edgar Allan Poe: A Study in Genius" was the first psychoanalytic biography, but he disclaims fanatic Freudianism. "The Twelve Seasons" is his tenth book and the one he would most like to be remembered by. "After all, 'Henry David Thoreau' is about Thoreau, and this," he smiles, "is about me." —R. G.

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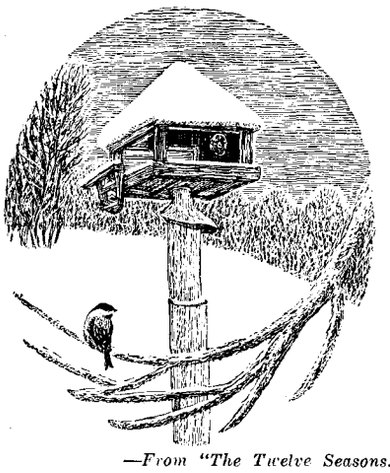
phora. Other coincidences must follow before beetledom is achieved. The apparent wastefulness and capriciousness of this arrangment, which invites chance to play the chief role, impresses Dr. Krutch by the contrast it offers to the mechanical behavior of the stars, which have their courses set and move on schedule. In the course of his contemplation, Meloë becomes something more than an unimpressive beetle.

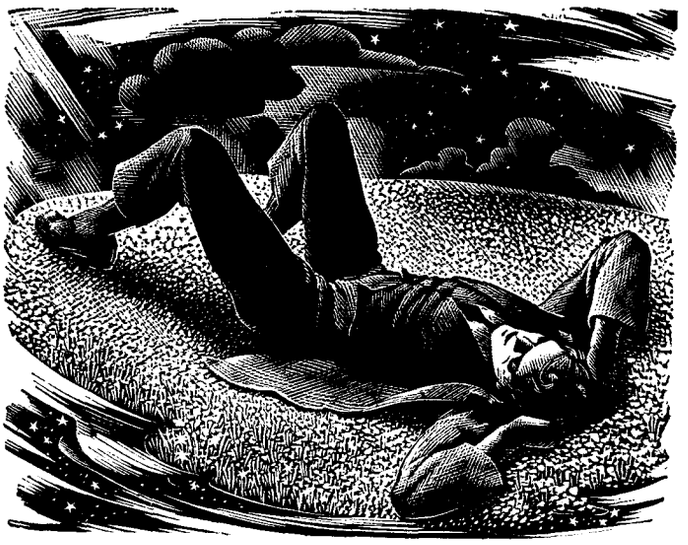
Dr. Krutch has an eye for this contrast between dead and living nature. In March he speculates on whether life may not be "a rebellion against law and probability, an intrusion—perhaps spontaneous and anarchical—into what would otherwise have been a system, perfect in its neatness and regularity. . . . Perhaps God Himself did not originally envisage it. Perhaps by now it is opposing itself even to Him."

It is to understand man that humanists study nature, and Dr. Krutch is a humanist. The big question is, where does man belong in this divided universe of order and rebellion? His personal answer is expressed in what he is moved to say to Meloë or to the piping frogs of early spring: "Don't forget, we are all in this together." He concludes, however, that we men, in choosing where we shall have our chief business, have made the wrong choice. We have tended to become the mechanic and technologist. We have turned from Meloë, our kin through that spark of rebellion, to electronic calculators.

It is an injustice to separate out, in this fashion, one bit of speculation, to detach it from the continuing context of observation, to strip it of the grace and humor in which it is clothed, and to offer it to the reader trussed like a bird for the pan. After all, it was shot on the wing. Dr. Krutch's mind is on the wing all through the twelve seasons of this "perpetual calendar." The result is that a more distinguished work of literary expression is hardly to be looked for in 1949.



—From "The Twelve Seasons."



—From "The Old House at Coate."

Importance of Wonder and Delight

THE OLD HOUSE AT COATE. By Richard Jefferies. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 1948. 215 *pp.* $3.75.

Reviewed by CLARE LEIGHTON

WE ARE indebted to centennials. The publication of this new book of essays by Richard Jefferies, exactly 100 years after the date of his birth, reminds us of a thinker and naturalist too little known on this side of the Atlantic. These essays have been collected over forty years by a devoted disciple, Samuel J. Looker. They have never before appeared in any form. Written so long ago, out of a civilization that has passed, they seem strangely to belong with the world of today; for they speak of enduring values, and amaze us with an awareness of problems that concern us here and now.

The naturalist philosopher is often a prophet, for he lives in a world transcending the moment. Aware, thus, of the basic pattern of life, he supplies the impetus for action. Have we not lately discovered that it was to the American naturalist Thoreau that Gandhi owed his concept of civil disobedience?

Realization of the subtle importance of the naturalist gives us reverence for Jefferies. This lonely creature, watching the shape of the shadows thrown by the sun across his window frame in Wiltshire, aware of the presence of invisible stars in the sky at noon, exploring the sensuous delight of touch, upon lichen and flower, this sickly dreamer was also scientist. Not only did he "find a strawberry, by moonlight, kneeling on the sward," or "press the sweetbriar" as he passed; he directed his inquiring lens upon such questions as life-force. And so, back in the 1880's, he wrote: "Machinery is not the end of man. . . . When the air is utilized, too, and ships sail among the clouds, then I hope at least attention will turn to man himself." Conceding that a means of locomotion to the sun would yield "wondrous results," he affirms that what he wants, above all this, is more strength for the limbs; more and still more joy in living.

As we read we find ourselves thinking of another idealist: William Morris, with his utopian "News from Nowhere." In this crystalline society of today, geared to formulae and mechanization, it is salutary to hear a voice from the past that, aware of the dangers of scientific discovery, reminds us of the importance of wonder and delight.

And then again, as we read on, we grow increasingly excited. Worthy brother to Leonardo, this solitary who was struggling always with "the enormous burden of the unexpressed," set himself to ponder on the flight of the dragonfly and the bee. Watching the mannerism of flight of each bird, the rise and fall of the finch, the aerial stroll of the rook, he discerned the possibility of the actual mechanism of flight for man himself, discovering precisely how an "undulating wing" might be devised.

Jefferies came before his time. An obscure failure in his span of thirty-nine years, he might, had he lived today, have pointed the way to sanity from our obsession with power.

It is a worthy coincidence that his body lies in the same graveyard in Sussex as that of an equally great naturalist, W. H. Hudson.

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Busyness in a Waxen City

THE CITY OF THE BEES. By Frank S. Stuart. New York: Whittlesey House. 1949. 243 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by JOHN WOODBURN

THERE is an old, stump-fence rhyme of which I am very fond, which goes:

I eat my peas with honey;
I've done it all my life.
It makes the peas taste funny,
But it keeps them on the knife.

It so happens that I do not eat my peas with honey, or on the knife, for that matter, and I regret that Frank S. Stuart, apiarist and author, whose "The City of the Bees" fairly swarms with fascinating information about the wild brown bee, should have felt it necessary to secure his facts to the knife of his narrative by encapsulating them in a prose so honeyed that I found myself recalling, after all these years, an occasion in my childhood when, at one sitting, I ate an entire, nearly life-size chocolate rabbit. Almost any page will do, but here is a spoonful, dipped at random from pages 38 and 39, which, it seems to me, indicates that Mr. Stuart's style is more suited to the beatitudes than to the study of bee-attitudes. A bee is extracting nectar from an apple bloom:

> If happiness can achieve the ultimate, this was perfection. There was no selfishness in it; the golden food that the gods drank on Olympus was being gathered, not for herself but for the children of the city. . . . Daintily around her body she bore the golden pollen dust from the generous stamens of the cider tree. As she stooped, the flushed face of a young pippin blossom lifted itself towards her like a kiss. As she touched its loveliness, a breath of summer air sent it dancing upward in glee, and the silken petals closed about her in a swift embrace. . . . At last, the bee's delicious task was done, and she crept from the sated flower, and passed on to another and another and another, hurrying to each in the ecstasy of love's fulfillment, and taking from each a ransom of golden nectar.

This is the kind of writing which makes Mr. Stuart's facts taste funny, and it is with a mild shock that the reader comes upon, four lines below that last sentence, the simple, sturdy pea of information: "To gather a pound of honey, bees must make a combined flight that totals over 50,000 miles, a distance that would girdle the earth twice," and that 500 pounds of honey would be only a moderate summer's harvest for such a community as the one which hums through the pages of "The City of the Bees."

In all fairness to Mr. Stuart, his story of one year in the life of a colony of wild bees repeatedly triumphs over his mellifluous style, and I confess that there were times, many of them, when I found myself completely engrossed with the elaborate social structure, the courage and fatalism, the brilliant cunning and the atavistic instinct and memory, the obsessive, selfless industry of creatures which I tend to think of as merely a part of the orchestra of summer (Mr. Stuart's prose is infectious). Bees, I know now, maintain architects for the delicate structure of the honey-combs and the walls of their waxen city; nurses are trained in the duties of caring for the precious larvae; incorruptible bee-guards frisk and identify all comers to the portals, and hundreds of uncomplaining worker-bees, by moving their wings at tireless and varying speeds, maintain a constant, salubrious temperature within the hive, where even the variation of a fraction of a degree may prove fatal to the slumbering nymphs and larvae. Such things are but a small part of the lore which Mr. Stuart has accumulated through his years of bee-keeping and bee-watching and, if one has the patience to locate them through the sugary aspic of his prose, "The City of the Bees" makes highly rewarding reading. It does seem to me that his passionate interest in his subject occasionally leads him to draw a long bow—as when he assures us that bees will remember a kindness done by human beings, an act of Good Samaritanism, over a period of years, the information passed on through succeeding generations, so that they will not sting a man who showed kindness to a great-great-great grandmother—and often the discipline of his observation is clouded with pathetic fallacies.

Your Literary I. Q.

By Howard Collins

TALE'S END

A. C. Palmer, of Pomfret Center, Connecticut, asks you to match up the final sentences of twenty famous short stories with the names of their authors. Allowing five points for each correct answer, a score of sixty is par, seventy is very good, and eighty or better is excellent. Answers on page 15.

1.	And so they met.	( ) S. V. Benét
2.	"Well, Merry Christmas!"	( ) A. Bierce
3.	"I was his first penitent."	( ) E. P. Butler
4.	"I cannot call him to mind."	( ) J. O. Curwood
5.	And I turned and went out quickly, for I did not want that youth to know that I could hardly see.	( ) A. Daudet
6.	"I'm the man who stole your cattle."	( ) R. H. Davis
7.	"School is dismissed—you may go."	( ) C. Dickens
8.	"What if thim dago pigs had been elephants!"	( ) A. France
9.	"I wonder what his goblets may be worth."	( ) J. Galsworthy
10.	I'm not talking about Massachusetts or Vermont.	( ) E. E. Hale
11.	The inquisition was in the hands of its enemies.	( ) B. Harte
12.	And so, as Tiny Tim observed, God bless us, every one!	( ) W. W. Jacobs
13.	"And, God help me! the Damned Thing is of such a color!"	( ) R. Kipling
14.	"I give a life for the life I took," he said, "and what can I do more?"	( ) P. Merimee
15.	"But it's us," she said, grimly, to herself, "it's us that furnishes the beef."	( ) C. Morley
16.	The street lamp flickering opposite shone on a quiet and deserted road.	( ) O. Henry
17.	"Have my son-in-law, Tiodoro Bianchi, sent for to come and live with us."	( ) E. A. Poe
18.	"Yes, I'll come down to dinner; but—what shall I do when I see you in the light!"	( ) Sir W. Scott
19.	"You hadn't ought to," he said, with a touch of his old impudence, "'cause—I beat the town."	( ) R. L. Stevenson
20.	"He loved his country as no other has loved her; but no man has deserved less at her hands."	( ) S. E. White

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Personal History.

Where did the body of ideas we call Jeffersonian democracy originate? One of the several important biographical studies reviewed below traces it to the philosophy of the fifth-century B.C. Oriental Confucius. The idea has been broached before, but never as persuasively as by H. G. Creel in "Confucius, the Man and the Myth." . . . Hesketh Pearson, who deserted the stage to become one of the ablest biographers of our day, skilfully recreates the life of one of the ablest novelists of the Victorian era in "Dickens, His Character, Comedy, and Career." . . . There have been more scrupulous biographies of Beaumarchais than that by Georges Lemaitre, another book of the week, yet the career of the unsavory Frenchman who wrote "The Marriage of Figaro" and helped finance the American Revolution is intriguing enough to cause many readers to overlook its inadequacies.

Our Eastern Heritage of Democracy

CONFUCIUS, THE MAN AND THE MYTH. By H. G. Creel. New York: John Day Co. 1949. 363 *pp.* $5.

Reviewed by CHARLES P. FARNSLEY

H. G. CREEL, of the University of Chicago, has written a book I would like to have written myself—probably the greatest compliment a reviewer can pay an author. "Confucius, The Man and the Myth" is a book which should reorganize the curriculum of every university in America. Whether it will or not is anybody's guess. Although the author with customary academic caution too often qualifies his statements, he has capably traced what we call Jeffersonian democracy from the philosophy of Confucius and Mencius through the Jesuits of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to the French Physiocrats and thence to our own Franklin and Jefferson.

Thomas Jefferson was influenced by the Physiocrats, a group of eighteenth-century French philosophers led by Dr. Quesnay, a friend who had much to do with the formation of Franklin's philosophy. Quesnay admitted that the Physiocratic doctrines had their origin in China and Mr. Creel points out that Jefferson's "Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge" introduced in the Virginia House of Representatives in 1779 had much in common with the Chinese examination system in that it gave students of outstanding ability the opportunity for higher education so that their services might be available to the state. Jefferson later visualized such a system on a national scale and in attempting to work out this plan he was aided by a Physiocrat who emigrated to this country, a former secretary to Dr. Quesnay named DuPont de Nemours. The University of Virginia was intended to be part of this plan of national education, and in Kentucky in 1798 the legislature established Lexington Seminary and Jefferson Seminary at Louisville (the latter still operated as the University of Louisville). The charter which granted each of these schools 6,000 acres of land uses the exact language of Jefferson's "Bill for the General Diffusion of Knowledge."

> Jefferson's plan [Dr. Creel points out] had three principles in common with the Chinese examination system: (1) Education was to be considered a principal concern of the state. (2) Students of outstanding ability were to be selected, by means of competitive examinations, at three levels; students at the lowest level were to be selected from small districts, and at the highest from the whole state (corresponding to the Chinese district, provincial, and national examinations). (3) A major purpose was to "avail the state" of the services, as officials, of the most talented of its citizens, whether they might be rich or poor and regardless of pedigree. It differed from the Chinese system in that it provided some free education for all, it called for the education of the talented wholly at public expense, and Jefferson would have required that his "natural aristocrats" must not only pass examinations but also be elected to office, not appointed as in China.
>
> These similarities do not, of course, prove that Jefferson's ideas were influenced by the Chinese examination system. There is, however, a distinct possibility of such influence. It seems certain that Jefferson knew of the existence of the Chinese system before he introduced his bill of 1779. It has been demonstrated that not later than 1776 he had read, and made extensive notes on, a work in which Voltaire declared that "the mind of man could not imagine a better government" than that of China at the beginning of the seventeenth century, where virtually all power lay in the hands of a bureaucracy "whose members were admitted only after several severe examinations." The Chinese examination system was described in detail in numerous early European books, of which at least one is known to have been in Jefferson's library.
>
> Jefferson considered his educational program to be of fundamental importance. Only in some such manner, he was convinced, could democracy fortify itself against being slowly perverted into tyranny. . . .

—*The Bettmann Archive.*

Confucius—"wrongfully distorted."

A great part of Dr. Creel's book is taken up in a worthy and successful effort to prove that Confucius was really a pioneer democrat who has been wrongfully distorted by authoritarians through the ages. Important as this is, the chapter on "Confucianism and Western Democracy" is the one that should make it rough on many of our smug peddlers of "our Western heritage." The custom of starting history of democratic thought with Greece is particularly dangerous because so many of the ideas of Plato are authoritarian and anti-democratic; while there were liberals in Greece, none of them developed a faith in the equality and brotherhood of man. While Reichwein's "China and Europe," Hudson's "Europe and China," Rowbotham's "Missionary and Mandarin," Hughes's "The Great Learning and the Mean-in-action," and the unpublished work of George H. Dunne and Donald Lach have laid the groundwork for Dr. Creel's book, none of these men completed the genealogy of the enlightenment of the eighteenth century which badly needed doing and which may well serve the cause of democracy.

Charles Farnsley is mayor of Louisville, Kentucky.

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Once an Author, Always an Actor

DICKENS: HIS CHARACTER, COMEDY, AND CAREER. By Hesketh Pearson. New York: Harper & Bros. 1949. 361 pp. $4.

Reviewed by JOHN T. WINTERICH

THIS is an admirable and thoroughly satisfying job. It tells a story with which most people are familiar, at least to the extent of having read "David Copperfield." It essays no new frills or twists or interpretations; it is not slanted; it does not brush all, or any, of its numerous predecessors aside with the implication that here, at last, is the Dickens biography the world has been waiting for.

Nor is it, in the strictest and most literal sense, objective. There are times when Mr. Pearson admires Dickens, times when he pities him, and times when he detests him. But his admiration, his pity, and his detestation are tempered by an appraising detachment that nowhere gets out of hand. Mr. Pearson's pulse, unlike that of his subject, which in the final months of his life would soar to 124 after he had added the murder scene from "Oliver Twist" to his platform repertoire, maintains a steady gait throughout.

Mr. Pearson was once an actor, and Dickens was always an actor. Mr. Pearson discusses his professional attainments with professional competence. The most casual student knows something of Dickens's passion for the stage, but before Mr. Pearson, only Alexander Woollcott ("Mr. Dickens Goes to the Play") had attempted any incisive study of the depth and scope of that passion. It pervades this book as it pervaded Dickens's life. The readings were inevitably turned into the chief dramatic outlets of this stage-struck author who would have enjoyed life no less, and probably more, as an ink-struck actor. From April 1858 to March 1870, Mr. Pearson computes, Dickens gave 423 professional readings (plus innumerable deadly serious rehearsals and many performances for charity) which netted him £45,000 —almost half of the £93,000 at which his estate was appraised at his death.

John Forster has a chapter to himself, and so does Kate Dickens to herself. Neither fares particularly well, which is no fault of Mr. Pearson. Forster he obviously dislikes intensely, and he carries the reader with him. For Kate he as obviously feels a compelling sympathy, which does not interfere with the exercise of his judgment. If she was "never treated by her husband as an adult," Dickens found some justification for his attitude in the fact that Kate rarely acted like one. She was "amiable, gentle, reposeful, and rather characterless." We are told, credibly, that "strenuous action distressed her" (the American journey must have been concentrated hell for her), yet she married a man "who really needed a forty-wife-power partner." The inevitable complication with Ellen Ternan (who after Dickens's death married a minister) was mildly lurid but wholly anticlimactic. Dickens was twenty-seven years her senior, and she did not love him in December as he had loved Kate in May.

Dickens the person has never been more graphically presented—one must not say three-dimensionally, because Dickens had many more dimensions than that. He was not only a gifted part-time actor who would have been a great full-time actor, but he "would have had a brilliant success in theatre management, and nothing would have given him greater pleasure." He was a first-rate editor. He was a skilful amateur magician. He was a hypnotist of proved and rather eerie powers, with several cures to his credit. He was an indefatigable walker, regarding ten miles as a mere jaunt, and greatly preferring twenty-five—he averaged four miles an hour, a pace at which walking ceases to be pleasure for most of us.

—*The Bettmann Archive.*

American caricature of Charles Dickens—"a most successful, most unhappy man."

But to say that he was all of these things, and several more, does not, after all, tell what manner of man he was. Mr. Pearson presents him full-length and full-bodied. All of him is here, including Dickens the novelist. Mr. Pearson does not permit himself the luxury of literary criticism, save where this is essential for an understanding of the literary creator, but his command of the Dickens canon is searching and thorough.

The two American expeditions are detailed with pungency, though Mr. Pearson's unfamiliarity with the ground leads him to imply, without exactly stating, that Dickens's route from Boston to New York took him, in that order, through Hartford, New Haven, Wallingford, Worcester, and Springfield, just as if he were on an expense account. Earlier there is an implication (again not a direct statement) that when Little Nell died, early in 1841, "groans of grief [issued] from cowboys on the prairie and mining camps in California." This conclusion is apparently based on Forster's quotation, in full, of Bret Harte's "Dickens in Camp," the best-known verses inspired by the death of Dickens. But Harte specifically declared that the horny-palmed audience he described was silent in order "to hear the tale anew." California's Dickens-reading mining population in 1841 could have been counted, at most, on the point of one pickaxe.

Mr. Pearson has given us biographies of Gilbert and Sullivan, Conan Doyle, Shakespeare, Shaw, and Wilde. All of them are good. None of them is better than this fine portrait of a most successful, most unhappy man.

FRASER YOUNG'S LITERARY CRYPT: No. 308

A cryptogram is writing in cipher. Every letter is part of a code that remains constant throughout the puzzle. Answer No. 308 will be found in the next issue.

AND JUST QUIET AU

BUSHNOT, KQL JUST

JKQEF AU LTDRNDT,

AZKQ AU STOTQHT KQ

NQGMSF.—I. BSKQCENQ

Answer to Literary Crypt No. 307

Nine-tenths of mankind are more afraid of violence than of anything else. —WALTER BAGEHOT. Biographical Studies.

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Entertaining World

THE NORTH STAR IS NEARER. By Evelyn Eaton. New York: Farrar, Straus & Co. 1949. 232 pp. $2.75.

Reviewed by PAMELA TAYLOR

MISS EATON, having written some excellent historical novels, turned in "Every Month Was May" to personal reminiscences. In this second volume she includes some of the high points along her way, sketches which are light-hearted, extremely amusing, but built on a relish for the inconsistencies and contrasts of modern life.

One cheering phenomenon of today's unpredictable world is the ability of women to have a good life despite circumstances which, a generation or two ago, would have doomed them to lives of hopeless monotony. Born into a well-connected but not particularly solvent English family, Miss Eaton, with a more fashionable than thorough education, has managed to hold a number of jobs, write a number of books, bring up a daughter whose father she had divorced while the child was still an infant, and see the world rather extensively.

If there have been difficult times and days of anxiety she does not inflict them on her readers. It is the amusing things which have happened to her that she wants to share. Her earnest efforts, as a conventionally brought up little girl, to be sure of going to hell (her adored father assured her he was going there and that since the arrival of Napoleon the nether regions had surely been most efficiently and attractively reorganized by that great military genius); her visits to Grandmother, who left Canada every few years for an English visit "to catch up with the dear Queen"; the difficulties of getting home from a bank clerk's job in time to get properly dressed for presentation at Court, and various other English experiences are all accented by her quiet amusement at the spectacle of the British upper classes clinging devotedly to conventions and traditions in the midst of chaotic change.

—From "The North Star Is Nearer."

In a hilarious account of being the most completely unnoticed guest of honor on record, Miss Eaton demolishes once and for all that literary-social futility, the publisher's cocktail party.

But she is at her best in the chapters which deal with her life in France. She has an enviable gift for catching, in her pieces, that peculiar blend of virtues and foibles which gives a nation its individual flavor. In France she sees all but tolerates much, because she loves. The deft sketches of the little war orphan whom she briefly and disastrously befriended, of that "avaricious grippe-sous" Mère Turbiot, of the concierge's daughter who had theatrical ambitions, and of the Provençal witch who wanted a bicycle sum up France in one of her many aspects, and her "little people" who exasperate almost as much as they charm.

There are a good many other episodes in the book—contrasting office jobs in England and in France, a visit with bandits in Corsica, a swimming race with a shark (or was it a dolphin, as the Cistercian lay brother who watched insisted?), an encounter with a light-fingered ghost, and finally some trips as a war correspondent, in China and in Egypt.

Miss Eaton passes along to her readers a world which she has found thoroughly entertaining. To be adaptable, to be amused but never irritated by the vagaries of human beings, "to meet frustrations with indifference, and loneliness with relief"—if we read these as some of her guiding principles we must find them between the lines.

LITERARY I.Q. ANSWERS

1. Harte: "Tennessee's Partner." 2. Morley: "The Commutation Chophouse." 3. Curwood: "His First Penitent." 4. France: "The Procurator of Judaea." 5. Galsworthy: "Quality." 6. White: "The Two-Gun Man." 7. Daudet: "The Last Lesson." 8. Butler: "Pigs Is Pigs." 9. Stevenson: "A Lodging for the Night." 10. Benét: "The Devil and Daniel Webster." 11. Poe: "The Pit and the Pendulum." 12. Dickens: "A Christmas Carol." 13. Bierce: "The Damned Thing." 14. Scott: "The Two Drovers." 15. O. Henry: "The Third Ingredient." 16. Jacobs: "The Monkey's Paw." 17. Merimee: "Mateo Falcone." 18. Kipling: "The Brushwood Boy." 19. Davis: "Gallegher." 20. Hale: "The Man Without a Country."

Fascinating Rogue

BEAUMARCHAIS. By Georges Lemaitre. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. 1949. 359 pp. $$4.

Reviewed by LOUIS GOTTSCHALK

IN DAYS when publishing costs are high and scholarship is considered dull, a publisher is perhaps justified in producing a book like this. It is written with verve, around a character who, as clockmaker, inventor, government official, courtier, diplomatic agent, swindler, lover, speculator, adventurer, pamphleteer, and editor, always exceeded the ordinary, and as dramatist and champion of the American Revolution achieved distinction. Few rogues have been more brilliant, lovable, or successful than Beaumarchais, author of "The Barber of Seville" and "The Marriage of Figaro," who became the French foreign minister's tool for aiding the Americans secretly during the time that France was pretending to be neutral in their rebellion against England; and this biography of him should provide a few hours' entertainment for those readers who prefer to venture vicariously by way of history rather than fiction.

But if publishing this book, once it was written, may be justified, it is harder to justify the way it is written. Over a hundred years ago Alexis de Tocqueville warned that in a democracy, where authors' profits and fame spring from "the heterogeneous and agitated mass," they "will aim at rapidity of execution more than at perfection of detail." This book lacks perfection of detail. The proofreading was careless—which, in a Borzoi book is unusual. Dubious statements are frequent—sometimes more than one to a page. Recent works, not merely on the eighteenth-century setting but even on Beaumarchais, seem to have been overlooked, but one cannot be sure, since the piddling bibliography and the lack of documentation may not truly represent the extent of Professor Lemaitre's research for the book.

Moreover, the author's *parti pris* is too manifest. Beaumarchais is defended against all comers—not merely those who quarreled with him over women and money, but also Franklin, who differed with him on foreign affairs, and Goethe, who dramatized an episode of his life in a way he did not like. This partisanship becomes particularly warm on the matter of "the lost million," a sum entrusted by Foreign Minister Vergennes to Beaumarchais for his clandestine

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trade with the United States. Professor Lemaitre only reluctantly admits that the United States did not owe Beaumarchais that million, as Beaumarchais claimed, since Vergennes regarded it as a gift to the United States; and he considers niggardly the ultimate settlement by Congress with Beaumarchais' heirs.

Yet he admits that Beaumarchais more than broke even in this American venture, and was handsomely remunerated besides for his maritime losses by the king. Thus Beaumarchais made "a good thing" out of his show of patriotism even without Congress's settlement. Though Beaumarchais was generous (at six per cent interest) and Congress was not, he was no less a war profiteer. Lemaitre fails to see this not only because he believes Beaumarchais and his friends and discounts the testimony of his enemies but also because he is sentimental. His pictures of Louis XV and Louis XVI, of Lafayette's self-sacrifice, of French enlightenment and humanitarianism, and of the fall of the Bastille, come right out of the Romantic historians, somehow skipping later generations of more cynical writers. Thus he seems never to have discovered that Beaumarchais and other Frenchmen were at first concerned with making a French general commander-in-chief of the American army.

In short, there is reason to believe that this biography presents a legendary Beaumarchais based on Beaumarchais' own version of the legend. Even so, Lemaitre is less gullible than some earlier biographers. In two regards at least, he detects in Beaumarchais a deep-dyed, if fascinating, scoundrel—the first, when he connived, unsuccessfully, with one of his mistresses to seduce the Spanish King Charles III, and the other, when he got handsomely remunerated for trailing a blackmailer who existed chiefly in his own imagination. If Beaumarchais had been an ordinary adventurer, these two episodes would have warned even the most unsophisticated biographer to beware of his testimony. Perhaps the finest tribute to Beaumarchais' personality is nothing his biographers say about him explicitly but rather the unstinted admiration he excites in them. No matter how much of a rascal he may have been, he seems to have been able to win apologists generation after generation.

Louis Gottschalk is professor of modern history at the University of Chicago and author, among other books, of "The Era of the French Revolution."

The World.

If you have any doubt of the way World War II expanded the horizons of American businessmen and scholars, consider the case of books about the Near East. A decade ago virtually all that were available came from British hands and betrayed the Empire's point of view. But today Americans are building up a bookshelf of their own. Besides many volumes on Palestine, we now have such works as Mikesell's and Chenery's "Arabian Oil" (reviewed last week), Roosevelt's "Arabs, Oil, and History" (to be reviewed soon), and Kirk's "Short History" (see below). . . . What can we do with Germany and Japan? Knop's "Prowling Russia's Forbidden Zone" (see "USSR" this week) and Francois-Poncet's "The Fateful Years" (reviewed below) offer interesting ideas about Germany. Because very little has been written about Nippon, Ball's "Japan: Enemy or Ally?" is especially valuable.

Not-So-Innocent, Cold-War Victim

JAPAN: ENEMY OR ALLY? By W. Macmahon Ball. New York: John Day Co. 1949. 244 pp. $3.

Reviewed by RICHARD E. LAUTERBACH

IN HIS recent book, "The Situation in Asia," Owen Lattimore warned that Japan was likely to blow up "like a stink bomb." Here is a first-hand report on conditions in Japan from an independent and trained observer which documents Professor Lattimore's position. It is essential reading for anyone trying to understand the boomerang qualities of U. S. policy in the Far East.

The author, Macmahon Ball, served in 1946-47 as representative of the British Commonwealth on the Allied Council for Japan alongside the delegates of the United States, China, and the Soviet Union. An Australian political scientist, Mr. Ball was the sanest and ablest diplomat functioning in postwar Japan. His book is a dispassionate appraisal of the good and bad in our occupation. He finds Japan less perfect than General MacArthur, less a tool of American imperialism than the Russians.

W. Macmahon Ball: "There has been no fundamental change in Japan's social structure."

Most Americans will be quick to support the latter position. When it comes to criticism of MacArthur, we tend to go more slowly. A recent Gallup Poll indicated that eight of every ten approve MacArthur's present role and that the public has "a tremendously favorable impression" of the job he has done. Would Americans still applaud so generously if they realized, as Mr. Ball does, that "there has been no fundamental change in Japan's social structure or in the political outlook of her leaders"?

For this is Mr. Ball's conclusion, and he advances some impressively cogent arguments to support it. He concedes that our original intentions were excellent but shows how our growing fear of Russia changed the official U.S. attitude toward Japan before basic reforms could take hold.

He believes that the Emperor is still the political and spiritual sovereign in the hearts and minds of the Japanese majority and that Hirohito is, if anything, stronger than before the war. He gives us credit for instituting land reform, but has grave doubts about Allied economic aid to Japan, fearing that it may become a disguised subsidy for Japanese reactionaries rather than a booster shot for the people's welfare. He agrees with Lattimore that we are kidding ourselves if we consider the Japanese to be safely pro-American. "They are pro-Japanese," Mr. Ball writes. "In the present situation it is elementary common sense to play along with the United States. . . . The

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primary political purpose today is to qualify for American aid in terms of the Truman doctrine."

So corrupt are the leading Japanese political parties that the Communists are beginning to make serious inroads. "Often the Communists have seemed to be the only people with enough courage and determination to accept responsibilities of leadership," Mr. Ball warns. "And in so far as Communist leadership aims at tangible improvements in the worker's living standards, it has genuine mass support, whatever ulterior motives its leaders may cherish." Ball lays the blame for these acknowledged Communist gains on MacArthur's insistence on free enterprise and private capitalism. If this policy continues, Ball maintains, Japan will have a depression and Communist gains will spread.

The other great danger in American policy, according to Mr. Ball, is that our rebuilding of Japan will enable her to reestablish industrial and economic supremacy in East Asia which Japanese leaders "will once again exploit for political purposes." The author thinks it entirely possible that Japan could become a threat to her neighbors "in the foreseeable future."

While others have given us similar views on the economic and political conditions in MacArthur's realm, none have had the opportunity to tell about the inside workings of the U.S.-run Allied Council in Tokyo. It is a sad thing to realize that a combination of Big Power importance and our anxiety to check any Russian moves made the Allied Council anything but democratic. Mr. Ball, with his mildly Socialist views and his deeply seated integrity, actually took a worse beating from the American whip on the Council than did the Soviet delegate. Characteristically, Mr. Ball has restrained his bitterness in recounting the Council story. He does write, more in sorrow, that "the Chinese member and I had been reluctant to place items on the [Council] agenda, even in the form of questions, since it was clear that GHQ was extremely sensitive and resentful about any question or comment which might be construed as a criticism of General MacArthur or his officers."

As a showpiece of democracy in action, the Council was hardly a lesson to the Japanese. Now it appears that the widely heralded occupation of Japan is also failing, a not-so-innocent victim of the cold war.

Richard E. Lauterbach, former editor of the magazine '48, is author of "Danger from the East" and "These Are the Russians."

Accent on the Arabs

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE MIDDLE EAST. By George E. Kirk. Washington, D. C.: Public Affairs Press. 1949. 301 *pp.* $3.75.

Reviewed by PAUL L. HANNA

EDUCATORS, students, and the general reader alike have found that, while there is a considerable number of good studies on specific countries or special topics about the Near East, there has been no satisfactory general work dealing with the historical background and current problems of the region as a whole.

George E. Kirk has endeavored with considerable success to supply the lack. His "Short History of the Middle East" takes as its region the Arabian peninsula, the Arabic-speaking countries of the Fertile Crescent, the Arabic-speaking lands of northeast Africa, and the non-Arabic borderlands in Anatolia and Persia. Attention is, however, so concentrated upon the Arabs as almost to exclude consideration of events in Turkey and Iran. The period covered is from the rise of Islam to mid-1948 with almost three-quarters of the volume being devoted to the period since 1800.

Mr. Kirk believes that only religion and the acceptance of divine sovereignty can transform and redeem civilization in the Middle East or elsewhere; "mankind will find no home . . . this side of the Civitas Dei." For better or worse, however, the author seldom intrudes his philosophic thesis into the course of his narrative or employs it for the elucidation of his descriptive material. Essentially he has written a work which, aside from the opening and concluding pages, might with minor changes of phrase and emphasis have been composed by a materialist, though certainly not a Marxist.

The book gives a generally adequate though brief survey of the rise and decline of that medieval Arab-Moslem culture of which some knowledge is essential for any understanding of contemporary thought and institutions in the Middle East. Mr. Kirk strikes a nice balance between the views of those phil-Arabs who have exaggerated the Moslem contribution to culture and those detractors who have reduced it to the preservation of Hellenistic knowledge and of its transmission to the renascent West.

The modern development of Western political and economic imperialism is adroitly handled and the growth of Arab nationalism is treated

—*Burck* in Chicago Sun-Times.

"Revolt in the Desert."

with clarity and insight. Concerning the leaders of this movement at the time of the First World War Mr. Kirk writes, "National freedom meant primarily to them, as members of leading Arab families, access to positions of power and authority. . . . There is no evidence that the desirability of improving the economic and social conditions of the poorer classes of the population played at this stage any part in their programme. . . ." Yet he emphasizes that the peasant masses were imbued with the anti-imperialism and anti-foreignism of the leaders and have sincerely preferred poor government by their own people to more efficient government by external powers.

Though he can see and analyze deficiencies in Arab civilization and the errors in Arab policy, Mr. Kirk has not entirely escaped the strong compulsion for an historian of the Arabs to view the Palestine problem through pro-Arab eyes. Zionists will claim with some justification that he has employed selected instances and will point to his reliance upon Nevill Barbour's "Palestine: Star or Crescent," a scarcely objective study of the Palestine controversy, as proof of their contention.

Mr. Kirk closes his book with an excellent survey of economic and social conditions and of Russian and Western interests in the Middle East today. He recognizes the crying need for economic and social reform and he equally recognizes the difficulty of effecting such change. "In Egypt and the countries of the Fertile Crescent it is doubtful whether, owing to the self-regarding conservatism of those in power, effective social reform can be achieved by evolutionary and con-

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stitutional means." He argues that present Anglo-American policy should encourage the "extension of economic and political power from the present narrow ruling-class to a much wider cross-section of the population." But he makes no firm prediction for the success of such a policy:

> With the alternatives of nationalist isolationism, Western liberalism, and Communism before it, it remains to be seen whether the Middle East will succeed in making for itself a synthesis or a selection of these variant policies or whether, as seems at present more likely, it will passively have its future dictated for it by stronger external forces.

Paul L. Hanna is professor of history at the University of Florida. He is the author of "British Policy in Palestine."

Memories of the Third Reich

THE FATEFUL YEARS. By André François-Poncet. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1949. 295 pp. $4.

Reviewed by HENRY B. KRANZ

AS FRENCH Ambassador in Berlin from September 1931 to October 1938, André François-Poncet, economist and career diplomat, reported daily to his Government about political conditions in Germany. At the end of seven years his dispatches comprised forty volumes. His memoirs, published rather belatedly, are in the main based on some of the scripts which survived the war years.

After having read what Ambassador Dodd had to say about these "fateful years," and Nevile Henderson's account of the failure of his mission, one is bound to be curious to hear the report of their French colleague. He, too, had witnessed the rise of Hitler to power, the purge in 1934, the intrigues of international diplomacy, Germany's rearmament, the dismissal of General Fritsche, and finally the debacle of the Munich conference. M. François-Poncet was on much better terms with the Nazis than any other foreign diplomat: he was the only one who spoke German fluently and, therefore, could converse freely with Hitler and his aides.

Perhaps one has expected too much. Here are no shocking revelations, no startling inside stories, no conversations with the average German, no confessions of human weakness or blunder. There are even few anecdotes recorded which are not known or portraits of Nazi leaders that have not been better drawn before by other faithful reporters of the German scene. But the book gives many valuable facts, and it tells quite vividly the history of events in the Reich from the days of Chancellor Bruening to the Munich agreement, from the point of view of a man who professes that, although he knew Hitler would cheat, he believed that any agreement with him, even a mediocre one, was better than none. Ambassador Dodd in his diary tells us that M. François-Poncet as early as September 1933 insisted that war was almost certain to come. He was fully convinced, in 1934, that France was to be attacked by Hitler and that the Fuehrer intended to annex not only Alsace Lorraine and Austria but also Western Poland.

Now we read in the French Ambassador's memoirs that his repeated suggestions to take a firm stand against Hitler were considered too radical and never adopted. In 1935, when Hitler proclaimed the rearmament of the Reich, the powers reacted only by paper and procedure. During his seven years in Berlin M. François-Poncet was only once summoned to Paris to confer with the Minister of Foreign Affairs and his fellow envoys from other European capitals. Apparently hurt by this affront, he does not seem to have been too much surprised that France was unable to prevent a new world war.

His character portrait of Hitler forms one of the best chapters of the book. He calls the Fuehrer a "Nimmersatt," a man never satisfied, who lacked all sense of proportion, who set a value only upon what he did not yet possess, and who was urged on to extremes by a demon. He thinks Hitler can be called a "cold-blooded realist," and a "profound schemer" whose imagination was "wildly romantic." If M. François-Poncet realized that Hitler was the "sort of man who can be trusted only with reservation," one is rather surprised to read his last report to Paris, in which he summed up the experiences of his years in Germany "filled with disturbances, alarms, tempests, and tragedy." He says: "Should we turn a deaf ear, we would be the losers by providing Germany with the alibi she may be seeking in order to cover her future undertakings." He still did not feel that the Nazis would "create" such alibis, if they ever needed them. He did not fully believe that Hitler prepared for a war from the moment he came into power, that National Socialist Germany in the name of race concepts undertook to become the leading power in the world.

Today André François-Poncet may think differently. He is now diplomatic counselor to the French Foreign Minister, with special responsibilities for German affairs; and it has been reported that he will be appointed French High Commissioner in Western Germany. If only for this reason his experiences in Hitler's Germany and his strongly conservative opinions should be of great interest to any student of the international scene. If appointed, he will be one of the three men who can ruin or save the peace.

". . . But soft, what light through yonder window breaks?—what light through yonder window breaks?—what light. . . ?

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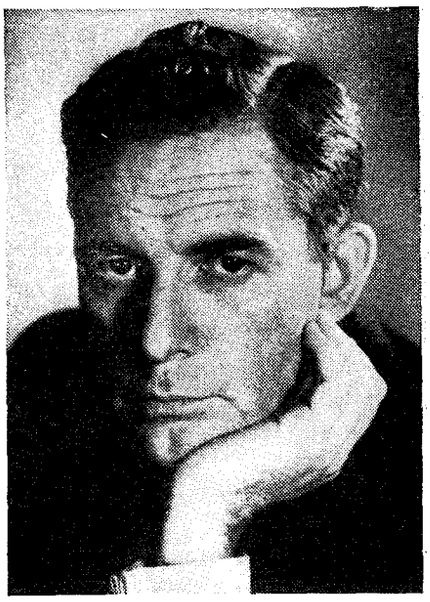
Fiction. *Philip Wylie's "Opus 21," in which the author is the hero of his own novel, may have been designed to shock the public into further acceptance of his well-known ideas. But however widely it departs from academic standards it is a brilliant and startling accomplishment, guaranteed to keep the reader in a state of nervous excitement. Two other novels written this week illustrate the same gift for exuberant and dramatic writing. William Lindsay Gresham's "Limbo Tower" reveals the authentic and feverish background of a tuberculosis hospital, in which a few men are living through the last days of their destinies. Allan Chase's "Shadow of a Hero" is a tense story of an investigation into the past of a man, presumably murdered, who is discovered to be dangerously alive, a Fascist and a criminal. In another vein Oscar De Liso's "God's Thumb Down" captures the humor and the tragedy of the people of an Italian mountain town which is slowly sliding to destruction.*



Philip Wylie: "Maleness has just about disappeared."

Philip Wylie in the Flesh

OPUS 21. *By Philip Wylie. New York: Rinehart & Co., Inc.* 1949. 375 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by HARRISON SMITH

THERE are several Philip Wylies and all of them are successful, if success can be measured by the satisfaction a man may take in his own achievements. He is the highly-paid designer of innumerable magazine serials, the author of two books of science fiction that are as good as any written today, and of a novel, "Finley Wrenn," which fifteen years ago startled the critics out of their pants. In his more recent "Night Unto Night" he came within sighting distance of creating a fine and serious novel. Then he assumed the robe of the prophet Jeremiah and in "Generation of Vipers" hurled thunderbolts at the American people, furiously denouncing all of the sins of commission and omission to which we had apparently fallen heir. The public ate it up, and nobody cared if he heard offstage a faint jingling from the jester's cap and bells or glimpsed the satirist grinning at his own conceits. Next he wrote "An Essay on Morals," a stimulating potpourri of Wylie, science, psychology, and Dr. Jung.

This brief summary of a few of Philip Wylie's accomplishments may spare any reader who in all innocence opens his new novel from leaping up dangerously from his chair as if he had sat down on a swarm of angry bees. "Opus 21" cannot be recommended to an invalid or to man or woman suffering from high blood pressure. It is as stimulating as that mixture known to accomplished alcoholics as "the drink to end all drinks." "Opus 21" means simply Mr. Wylie's twenty-first book; in it the reader will discover a memorable character out of his older novel "Finley Wrenn" surprisingly and somewhat embarassingly called Philip Wylie. It is a good deal like finding out that the stranger to whom you are talking and the man whose private affairs you are discussing are one and the same.

But what is the novel about? Obviously, Mr. Wylie and his ideas, since he uses this device to lecture at length on every controversial subject that has ever come into his agile and fertile mind. Never in the history of literature has an author allowed his hero to utter so many speeches, editorials, harangues, treatises, essays, or given him the chance to win so many controversial arguments. The author, to distinguish him from his hero, is well aware that too often he allows Philip to indulge in his peculiar vice, logorrhea. Shortly after our hero is told by his New York doctor that the growth at the back of his throat may be cancer, he is discussing love, sex, homosexuality, and what-not with a strange woman in his hotel restaurant. This is Yvonne ("soft hair, high breasts, haunted eyes"), who has run to New York from a husband who has been carrying on with a gentleman friend in a manner familiar to readers of "The Kinsey Report," a tome which the young lady, incidentally, is surreptitiously reading under the cover of Huxley's "Ape and Essence." Yvonne says aptly, "Good God, how the Wylies talk!," and once when she is off dancing with him, she says with honest pathos, "Let's talk about me."

Yvonne is one of the three beautiful women who are involved with him in the three days of Philip's life during which he is waiting for his death sentence or his reprieve by the doctors. The other two are exquisite prostitutes. Gwen and Yvonne have taken a room beside Philip in his hotel and are both trying to seduce him. It is not surprising that they fail completely, since the reader is left with no doubts about the hero's complete devotion to his absent wife. Yet it is perhaps a little shocking when these girls, thus cruelly frustrated from intimacy with a handsome author whom they have read, find compensation in each other.

But it is nephew Paul, a brilliant atomic scientist, who furnishes the drama in the last few chapters. This unfortunate cannot see why he cannot be happily married to Marcia, though he will always run the risk of bumping into one of her innumerable lovers. His uncle knows better, and so does Marcia, who has already taken to cheating Paul whenever she is sufficiently pressed to sin against her naive lover. Finally, the tortured girl runs back to Hattie's place, and Paul decides to die by jumping off the terrace of Philip's suite. In an intensely dramatic chapter he stands tottering on the edge of the abyss, while the police try to snare him and thousands wait below. But he doesn't die nor does Uncle Philip have to face living with an inoperable cancer in his throat.

It is difficult to resist the temptation to quote from Philip's speeches, although almost everything that Mr. Wylie has to say has a familiar ring. Either he has said it before in one of his books, or what is more likely, you have read it somewhere else, as a later echo of his voice. They are fine, ringing phrases, at any rate. For example, Mr. Wylie on the

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American male: "Maleness has just about disappeared from your native land, sister. The boys are all brought up by women, taught by women, and then they go to work to support women by manufacturing and distributing things women think they want. . . . You have been used to men who have been beaten to death by women before you got hold of them." It is more than possible that Philip Wylie, in this and other compelling and outlandish ways, has created a sense of despair in Americans for life as it is, a hope that some day it may be changed, and a set of easily absorbed ideas that may bring it to pass.

Elizabethan Love Conquers All

NO WALL SO HIGH. By Anne Powers. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co. 1949. 423 pp. $3.50.

Reviewed by VICTOR P. HASS

NO WALL is so high that love cannot scale it, Anne Powers says here in maybe 150,000 words. However, she says it prettily and with spirit so perhaps she can be forgiven for subjecting us to one more king-size costume romance of the Elizabethan era.

Miss Powers hasn't missed a trick and, being a skilful craftsman if not a very original one, she has managed a novel with an abundance of color, action, intrigue, treachery, and love. And since her protagonist must surely have been one of the most peripatetic of Elizabethans, she is constantly shifting sets. Her triumph is the seraglio of the Turkish Sultan on the Golden Horn. It's quite a layout.

Here, then, are all your old friends —and enemies—playing their accustomed roles at the same old stand. Elizabeth is close to the center of the stage with her make-up cracking as usual. She giggles as bloated Leicester pats the skinny royal knee, shrills down her advisers, greedily grapples for wealth while Howard, Drake, and Frobisher lick the pants off the Spanish Armada despite her penny-pinching.

Beside Elizabeth are gloomy Walsingham and the cat-like Burghley, who always lands on his feet. In the background is poor Mary Stuart, about to lose her head for the umpteenth time in fiction.

Smack in the center of the stage is Miss Powers's sole excuse (as I see it) for whipping up another historical cream puff. This excuse is Maurice Quain, a merchant. Quain is a big, handsome, brainy, and enormously wealthy man who, throughout the book, nurses a rather juvenile grudge against all women because fifteen years before his obviously lightweight wife had done him wrong. A cold fish is our sardonic Maurice. "He'd look imperturbable in hell," Miss Powers assures us. I suspect he was given every opportunity to show off there after he and his deadliest rival, Sir Edward Blount, the villain of the piece, rubbed each other out in the Garrison finish.

Still, Maurice is fun. No one can best him, not even that shrew on the throne. When the chips are down there is ice water in his veins. He's the original Mr. Clutch. At the moment of most acute danger he lifts a contemptuous eyebrow, almost flicks an imaginary speck of dust from an immaculate sleeve, and then disposes of the danger, in whatever form, without so much as ruffling a ruff.

But under that frigid exterior a heart beats in the breast of our Maurice. And it is his undoing. Long does he fight—400 pages or so—against his love for the gorgeous Katherine Perrot, another of the inevitable granddaughters of Henry VIII. (Midway of the book there is a breach in that wall of reserve Maurice has built around himself and he spends a tempestuous night with the tempestuous Katherine. But he catches himself in the morning with an acid rejection. Beside the glowing gal clad only in smiles he drops a Cartier special, making her feel just like the slut she appears to have been.)

It can't go on, of course. And it doesn't. In the end Maurice has surrendered and the wall is torn down. But he has one last great scene: stonily he buys off his enemies to free the way to Katherine. You have to see to appreciate the magnificence with which Maurice can sign away large chunks of real estate, fleets of merchant ships, counting houses, and the like and all for a girl.

Combine this sort of thing with a good description of the Spanish attack on Antwerp, harem politics in Constantinople, a strong account of the defeat of the Armada, and no end of intimate glimpses of Elizabeth's court and you have a somewhat better than average helping of historical hash. You won't learn anything new but you may be entertained. I doubt that Miss Powers hoped for more.

Magic Skyscraper

LIMBO TOWER. By William Lindsay Gresham. New York: Rinehart & Co. 1949. 275 pp. $3.

Reviewed by EDMUND FULLER

WILLIAM LINDSAY GRESHAM is an uncommonly interesting writer. His previous novel, "Nightmare Alley," was a highly specialized kind of shocker and made something of a stir. I admired it for its skill but disliked it on most other counts. It was anybody's guess what would come next from its author. Accordingly it is a happy occasion to report that Mr. Gresham now displays in "Limbo Tower," along with his other considerable talents, a breadth of range and the capacity for growth in stature. The stamp of the same personality is evident in both books, but they have nothing in common in their conceptions.

"Limbo Tower" (a title that is effective but in some ways unfortunate) is a modern tuberculosis hospital in what is unmistakably recognizable as the late domain of Boss Hague. Here the "Magic Mountain" is capsuled into a skyscraper and foreshortened into three days. We are brought into company with a group of characters who are dying more swiftly and more consciously than the rest of us. It is a long-accepted premise that such a condition makes possible special insights into the problems of life and death. Since these problems vary, or are believed to vary, in different generations, Mr. Gresham is attempting to bring the special insights to bear upon them in terms of right now.

Ben Rosenbaum, the last three of whose twenty-four years have been spent in the hospital, is a Marxist. His panacea for everything is the unity of the working class. Jasper Stone, ex-con man in the grand manner, is a natural philosopher. Joe Kincaid, sometime miner sometime preacher from Kentucky, combines the social impulse of the Marxist with a primitive Christianity. Inevitably he is reminiscent of Casy in "The Grapes of Wrath." Washington Lee is a young Negro whose career in the prize ring has been cut out from under him. The Mohammedan, Abdullah, once a taxi driver, is a more simple and resigned philosopher than Jasper Stone. He is also a skilled and subtle t.b. malingerer. Frank Vitiello, the range of whose mind is more or less restricted to horses and women, is trying to work out "systems" from a hospital bed.

These are the chief figures among the patients. Of those who have them

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in charge only three are major: Anne Gallagher, the nurse; young Dr. Crane, the resident physician, and the Wilsonian Dr. Wallace Gail Rathbone, director of the hospital and its chief surgeon.

Mr. Gresham builds his drama upon the interaction of these upon one another and the death of two of them. This social microcosm reminds us that we each, however zealous, see only segments of truth and that to make a whole we must labor to juxtapose and join these segments. And perhaps he is telling us that to do this we require some chastening perspective, such as a sense of the presence of God, or merely of His servant, Death.

The narrative skill in the book is of a high order. It is garnished with frequently brilliant dialogue and vivid projections of character. The hospital atmosphere is impressively authentic and the detailed account of the terrible operation known as a thoracoplasty, performed on Washington Lee, is overwhelming. It deserves anthologizing.

There are faults on the same scale as the virtues. Some passages grate harshly through falseness, simplifications, or sentimentalities. Dr. Kildare leers out from behind a post once in a while, as in the scene where Dr. Crane detects Gallagher's illness. Gresham has an irrepressible interest in the stunt and the novelty, and is still, as in the previous book, mildly obsessed with what the analysts call "primal scene." All these things are because Mr. Gresham's is an exuberant nature. He is lavishly creative but is not always sufficiently selective. Already he is a successful writer. If he continues to grow; if he takes several more steps ahead the equivalent of this advance over "Nightmare Alley," Gresham will be an American novelist to reckon with.

—*Leja Gorska.*

William Lindsay Gresham—"Perhaps we require some chastening perspective."

Welsh Lass in the Wanton Sisterhood

THE SPEAR PENNY. By Dorothy Davis Willette. New York: Coward-McCann, Inc. 1949. 283 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by ANN F. WOLFE

WHAT with Becky Sharp, Scarlett O'Hara, and lesser hussies of the wanton sisterhood, we ought to be resigned to it by this time: the wilful charmer cannot lose. Against her pretty wiles and offside plays the hero and the good, unselfish girl operate at a literary disadvantage. And when the *femme fatale* is a Welsh lass who "could charm the mist off the mountain" and is bent on saving something that she calls her soul, you may as well brace yourself for a bad time. Nobody in the book can count on having much fun, or even getting much work done, while the siren from Brecon is around.

On her wedding day Megan Wynne, middle daughter of the Pald Y Gwaye Powells, provokes a fight between her husband and her rejected suitor. "Over me, Megan Powell, they struggle," she gloats, in the inverted speech pattern of the Cymry. "Two good strong men. Over me, me, *me*!" The fight inspired by vanity ends in tragedy. To pay the expiatory "spear penny" Megan, her husband, and her sister leave their native Wales—the Principality, to the anti-British Welsh—and settle on a farm near kinsmen in Ohio.

That is to say, the henpecked husband and the good, unselfish sister do the settling. A stony Ohio farm in the rough-and-tumble era of President Van Buren is no place for a fine lady like Megan Wynne. Turning a modish back on drudgery and hardship—to say nothing of a husband and children—she goes on the stage as a performer and becomes the sensation of the New York theatre. Not, by the Red Dragon of Wales, without the good offices and the bad company of Early O'Rourke, a Celt of sorts himself.

It takes P. T. Barnum to put a crimp in Megan's luck. Jenny Lind's swift ascent to popularity ruins her Welsh rival's box-office appeal, but leaves her nuisance value intact. On the very last page of the book Megan still has the power and the will to keep her whole family in misery.

"Spear Penny," for all it is a fresh tale persuasively told, comes off less effectively as a novel than as an Ohio Mabinogion in which Johnny Appleseed and Merlin share legendary honors and King Arthur's knights are but sleeping brothers in arms to the pioneers who fought the British and Indians. The author has invested her story with a rich sense of history, Welsh and American. She has translated the customs, song, and folklore of the ancient Cymry from the savage beauty of the Brecon mountains to the raw civilization of ante-bellum America. Hollywood could fare farther and do worse than make use of this historical vignette to prove our spiritual indebtedness to the stubborn courage and the Celtic imaginativeness of the Welsh pioneers.

"Nobody in Dorothy Davis Willette's book can count on having much fun."

Italian Sodom

GOD'S THUMB DOWN. By Oscar DeLiso. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1949. 313 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by SIEGFRIED MANDEL

ALTHOUGH God's thumb seems to be down on the Italy of today, it is unlikely that any reader's thumb will be down on this novel, which, to my mind, is one of the best and most creative "first" efforts in recent years.

In much the same fashion that France drew literary attention after the First World War, so Italy lately has attracted many talented writers. Yet, no matter how sensitive and skilful is the approach to the Italian scene by American writers such as John Hersey, John Horne Burns, and Alfred Hayes, a feeling persists that they were only onlookers forced to rely upon improvised situations and character types for much of their material. To a great extent they became victims of what might be called tourist sentimentality.

This is not the case with Oscar DeLiso, who lived in Italy for ten years and whose book has caught the

(*Continued on page* 44)

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The Saturday Review Anisfield-Wolf Awards

AS THEY have for the past dozen years, the editors of *SRL* take pleasure in announcing the selection of two books for the Anisfield-Wolf Awards, given each year to the best works on racial relations published during the preceding year. The books chosen for 1948 are "Cry, the Beloved Country," by Alan Paton (Charles Scribner's Sons) and "Anatomy of Paradise: Hawaii and the Islands of the South Seas," by J. C. Furnas (William Sloane Associates).

Mr. Paton and Mr. Furnas will each receive prizes of $1,000. The books were selected from more than fifty submitted for the prize—the greatest number in the history of the award—by a committee consisting of Dr. Henry Seidel Canby, chairman of the editorial board of *SRL*, Professor Henry Pratt Fairchild, of New York University, and Professor Ralph Linton, of Yale University.

"'Cry, the Beloved Country'," Dr. Canby writes, "has already had an extraordinary history. Written by a South African unknown to literature, and finding its way quietly into this country, it was picked up by good readers who recognized in the novel something extraordinary and were glad to be able to publish the fact to their friends and the public. It is a deeply religious, deeply pathetic book about an old Zulu in the service of the Anglican Church near Johannesburg and his adventures in endeavoring to combat the widespread demoralization of his people by industrialization and get-rich-quick; and later his tragic search for his own children, who have left the beloved country and lost, or rather nearly lost, their souls. The feeling of the book is intense, and the background of Africa, particularly rural South Africa, extremely vivid and beautiful. The simplicity and sincerity of the narrative touch all readers. The prize to this book seemed triply earned, since it is not only a first-rate novel but also a highly significant study of the deterioration which can attend racial contacts heavy with prejudice and injustice, and shows the effect upon a still semi-primitive race of a highly technical, commercial, modern civilization."

ON "Anatomy of Paradise," Professor Linton, himself an authority on the Pacific, familiar through first-hand study with its islands, observes: "This book has the rare quality of combining scientific accuracy with humor and charm. Although its focus of interest is Hawaii, it can serve as a guide to the understanding of the vast island world which links Asia and America and with whose destinies our own is now inseparably joined. In his descriptions of native life the author has steered an honest middle course between idealization of the far-from-simple aborigines and the sort of debunking which would have endeared the book to disillusioned veterans of the Pacific campaigns. He has first-hand knowledge of many of the island groups and their inhabitants and is also familiar with the work of modern ethnologists. This makes it possible for him to explain certain aspects of native behavior which have puzzled Americans and Europeans from the first explorers to modern administrators. The sorry record of white men in the Pacific is treated with honesty and insight. Even the early missionaries, the favorite whipping boys of South Sea romantics are dealt with impartially. Of more immediate interest is the fact recorded that both Polynesians and Micronesians are at last on the increase and that nativistic and independence movements are now emerging among educated natives. An excellent section on the influence of the South Sea myth on our own art and literature, including the movies, and unusually good photographic illustrations increase the value of the book for non-professional readers."

The Anisfield-Wolf Awards were established by Edith Anisfield Wolf in memory of her father, John Anisfield, and her late husband, Eugene E. Wolf. They provide $1,000 for each of the two books adjudged to be the best in the field of race relations, either in creative literature or in the social sciences. To be considered for the award for 1949, three copies of a book in published form should be sent to Professor Henry Pratt Fairchild, New York University, Washingon Square, New York 3, N. Y.

Eaglets

By Florence Wilkinson

HOW they lie folded in together wing to wing
fanning out and beak to beak.
The young child does not speak
of them at all,
his eaglet's nest they are,
up, up and up,
small foot on stone by stone,
his eyes upon that nest
his very own.

Hollow a cavern far below
where indigo billows pour in and out;
faint is their roar to you
but the children smile to hear that rhythmic shout.
The children know
how pinetree, cavern and the wild sea shout
and how the eaglets folded wing to beak
hear pine and thunder speak.

Let them be,
eaglets and rockbound nest
curled inaccessibly
in children's breast.

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Pulitzer Prizes for 1948

MOST of the books and plays that win a Pulitzer Prize might be selected by any intelligent and informed jury of American citizens. It has become a truly democratic process, and perhaps for that reason these awards made annually by the trustees of Columbia University on the recommendation of the advisory board of the Graduate School of Journalism have gained weight and authority through the years. They are the American equivalent of the Nobel Prize, and they are worn by a man through the rest of his life as a kind of plastic laurel wreath and are buried with him in his obituary notices.

In the past there have been violent revolts against the Pulitzer selections. Sinclair Lewis and William Saroyan threw their wreaths into the nearest waste baskets, charging that they vitiated art at its source and compelled writers to become obedient and sterile. In 1934 three judges resigned because the awards paid no attention to any standard of criticism, and the next year the dramatic critics set up their own jury in protest against the mediocrity of the Pulitzer decisions.

It would be hard to find anything wrong with the latest awards to literature and the theatre. James Gould Cozzens's "Guard of Honor" does not appear on any of the best-seller lists today, but it is undoubtedly the best war novel published last year. It is objective, compassionate, and brilliant in its presentation of the eternal conflict between the civilian thrust into uniform and the professional soldier who finds in war the justification for a life spent waiting for action and authority.

Robert Sherwood's excellent "Roosevelt and Hopkins" has already gathered in most of the earlier awards for both biography and history. The forty boxes of the notes and memoranda of Harry Hopkins to which Mr. Sherwood fell heir have served him and the country well. He is the most decorated winner in the long list, since in the past he has claimed three Pulitzer Prizes for his plays. The only surprising factor in the selection of Arthur Miller's "Death of a Salesman" for the drama prize is the committee's choice of a play that did not reach the boards until February of this year. The success of this undeniably fine tragedy, which has filled its theatre to capacity for three months, is an evidence of the discontent of the public with the older symbols of American success and ambition.

In poetry the committee's selection of Peter Viereck's volume of verse written over the last eight years may be criticized by many who believe that there were a half dozen volumes of verse published in 1948 that were equal in merit. But since the criticism of poetry has become a free-for-all debate it is likely that no reasonable attack can or should be made on this or any sound poetry award. Few people will recall that last year the winner was Robert Lowell's "Lord Weary's Castle," of which little has since been heard. But Peter Viereck is so rich in experimental vigor, in new poetic attitudes, in colloquial expression, that "Terror and Decorum" is an admirable choice, and it has the further merit of breaking away from the Eliot-dominated past.

The history award went to Roy Franklin Nichols's "The Disruption of American Democracy," a study of the disordered years that prefaced the Civil War. Its message for today is plain: war is never inevitable but comes from the failure of human wisdom. —H. S.

The British Book Center

IT IS a pleasure to welcome to the United States a new cultural ambassador in the form of The British Book Center, which under the aegis of Great Britain opened its hospitable doors May 4 in New York. It will occupy one floor of the remodeled and charming house at 122 East 55th Street, in which the century-old firm of B. T. Batsford, Ltd., established its American headquarters last year. Those who have in the past visited its beautiful rooms and have seen the rows of nobly ranked volumes standing in eighteenth-century cabinets have suspected that more was in the wind than a single British firm, even one that holds a royal appointment to Queen Mary.

—From "A Batsford Century."

Batsford on High Holborn, now destroyed.

The British Book Center has long been needed in this country. No matter how many publishers shuttled across the Atlantic by the Queens or by air it has been increasingly difficult for Americans, whether they were booksellers or individual buyers, to get hold of the books announced by British publishers and reviewed in English journals. Now that twenty-two famous British firms are assembled under one roof with their stocks of publications warehoused elsewhere, with salesmen taking the long treks to California or Texas, the cultural and educational bonds between England and America will be greatly strengthened. Of what use was it for the American scholar or the reader to yearn for a list of British books, when it might take months to get them through bookstores, agents, or wholesalers, and then to have to pay the account in pounds and pence? Even the established booksellers, unless they were dealing with American branches of a few great firms, were presented with almost insurmountable difficulties with duty and freight charges, jobbers and transatlantic correspondence. Then if a British book began to sell confusion was twice confounded.

We have heard so much of the difficulties of the London publishers, whose premises and whose book center in Paternoster Row were bombed out in literary holocausts during the war and who were faced with severe paper rationing, that Americans have failed to appreciate the vitality and magnitude of British publishing today. Last year, for example, 14,686 new books and new editions were published in Great Britain in contrast to 9,897 brought out in the United States. That there has been an increasing demand here for English technical and educational publications has long been obvious. Our colleges and universities demand them, and the public and scholastic libraries need to restore their stocks of old classics and to build new lists of English literature. The British Book Center will bring money into England and permit publishers to bring out larger editions; in exchange, we will learn more about the culture and wisdom of our partner in the great business of bringing security and peace to the world in which we are now engaged. —H. S.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Bouquet

SIR: Your magazine seems to me to be more deeply concerned with human freedom and moral values than any other I know of. Keep up the good work.

G. R. CRONEMILLER.

New York, N. Y.

Rotten Egg

SIR: Certainly intensive research should be made and published on the sociologic phenomena represented by Capone, Mayor Curley, Dillinger, Jimmie Walker, *et al.* It is only after careful education that the public will ever learn to protect itself against such characters whom at present it not only nourishes but seems masochistically to embrace. This same capricious public demands that someone describe books for them and tell them which to read, a demand which results in the "best-seller" list and in the existence of your magazine. You have insisted that the lists should be honest. It behooves you, having assumed the solemn obligations implicit in guiding the reading and would-be reading public, to employ wisdom and honesty. I charge that the former was alarmingly absent in the engaging of one Lucius Beebe to review "Beau James" [*SRL* April 9].

I read the review, I confess, without noting who had written it. As I read, my anger mounted against the reviewer. When I checked to see who it was I realized how misplaced was any serious feeling against him, and my full ire was directed towards you who felt your publication to be on such a sound footing it could afford the insinuation of the Beebe effluvium. You went on to compound the boner by printing, "And who now, save a handful of jurists and newspaper reporters, remembers the name of Judge Samuel Seabury?" Whom is precious Lucius trying to insult?

ROBERT S. ECKE.

Kew Gardens, N. Y.

Conclave in Alabama

SIR: I am writing to ask that you correct a misstatement that appeared in Herschel Brickell's "Workouts for Writers" [*SRL* April 2]. This article states: "Despite the South's current interest in writing, and the number of writers who live there, *no conferences of the kind discussed here have ever been held in that section*" (italics mine). I am sure this was an oversight on Mr. Brickell's part, for the Alabama Writers' Conclave was founded in 1923 and has met annually ever since, except during the war years. The organization was developed with the aim of bringing together all the writers of the state once each year in a meeting where they could exchange information, hear lectures, and have informal discussions.

It would be ungracious of me to close without saying that even though our efforts were not mentioned in the article, the Alabama Writers' Conclave finds deep satisfaction in learning of the work being done in other sections by writers' groups.

LINNIE MAE BROBSTON,
President, Alabama Writers' Conclave.

Bessemer, Ala.

THROUGH HISTORY WITH J. WESLEY SMITH

"Oh I'll print it all right, Mr. Paine—but a title like 'Common Sense' isn't going to appeal to very many people."

Salvos Over China

SIR: Edgar Snow, in what purported to be a review of my book "Russia's Race for Asia" [*SRL* April 9], started off with an ugly sneer at my conduct of the Committee of Public Information in the First World War, and then proceeded to berate me for "errors of fact, judgment, and understanding," the "use of quotations out of context," and other dishonesties.

Inasmuch as he does not support the charges by citations, I have no other course than to answer in the same strain of angry and personal attack. I doubt, however, whether you would print my opinion of Mr. Snow, so may I claim space for discussion of certain ethical aspects of the case?

I have always assumed that it was the right of an author to have his work reviewed objectively or, at least, with some reasonable degree of impartiality and dispassion. Also that the purpose of a review was not controversy but critical assessment with criticism based on firmer and higher ground than prejudice. If these are justifiable assumptions, then what could be more unfair than to turn a book over to another author whose own writings give plain warning of a bias that will impel him to use his review either for attack or attempts at rebuttal?

When you handed "Russia's Race for Asia" over to Mr. Snow you cannot have been unaware that for years, both in books and articles, he has specialized in presenting a favorable picture of the Chinese Communists. You must have foreseen the violence of his dissent to my charge that the Chinese Communist Party was organized and financed by Russian agents, and that for a full thirty years it has been under Moscow's direction and control for the conquest of China and the subsequent communization of Asia.

It could have been no secret to you that he would particularly resent my denunciation of "those credulous liberals and fellow-travelers" who have labored so faithfully to persuade American opinion that the Chinese Communist Party is a purely native movement, led by agrarian reformers, and born of a people's spontaneous revolt against corruption and oppression. All propaganda that I branded as the Ultimate Lie.

True, certain metropolitan dailies have made a practice of this type of "reviewing." *The New York Times*, for example, put General Claire Chennault's book at the mercy of Annalee Jacoby, co-author of "Thunder Out of China." Higher standards, I submit, are to be expected of you.

GEORGE CREEL.

Washington, D.C.

SIR: The first three paragraphs of Mr. Creel's letter question my competence to review his book and the stain of original sin thus falls upon the editors of the *SRL*. In this case the devil declines to be his own advocate. Mr. Creel may be quite right.

The balance of his letter has no specific point of reference to the actual text of my review. He speaks of the "violence" of my dissent to one item and thinks that I "particularly resent" another set of opinions. In fact I did not examine either. To do so here would require more space than I wish to use to separate some par-

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tial truth from much implied untruth, in an opaque syllogism.

My review of his book was a statement of its avowed purposes and a synopsis of its contents, approached with the assumption that a non-fiction work must be held accountable for its historical foundations. A responsible critic must examine the material and technique used to buttress an author's conclusion, and point out structural defects, indicating lapses in ratiocination, where they exist.

Mr. Creel's assertion that my criticisms were based on personal prejudice must be judged against the internal evidence of his book contrasted with my evaluation of it. The truth is that I have never met Mr. Creel. I have no personal animosity toward him. I think I had never before read anything composed by him. I did not know he had accomplished the present work until I was asked to read it. Had any of these circumstances been otherwise I might have declined to review it. The only other reviews I read—Nathaniel Peffer in *The New York Times*, and Richard Lauterbach in *The New Republic*—offered much the same judgment, mitigated somewhat perhaps by personal acquaintance with Mr. Creel so far denied me. He can comfort himself with the thought that we are all biased; plenty of people will agree with him.

EDGAR SNOW.

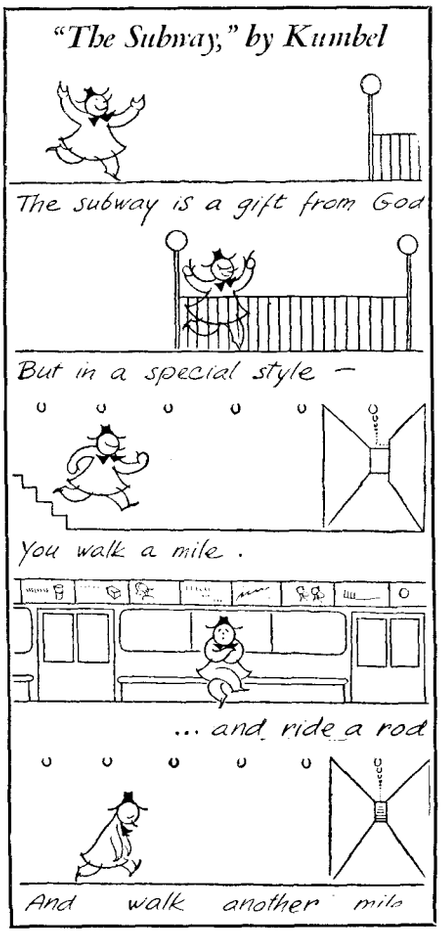
New York, N. Y.

Man's Fate

SIR: The trite expression "A plague on . . ." is appropriate but I refrain. Shaw says, "Lysenko has to pretend . . . Lysenko has to tell the flat lie . . .," ["Behind the Lysenko Controversy," *SRL* April 16]. The truth is, no man is compelled to do or say anything. He can be made to suffer and die, but if of stern stuff, he cannot be made to stultify himself in any respect. Implication of the need of thought control in Shaw's article is surprising, coming from such a thoroughly uncontrolled person as himself, but however attempted by State, Church, organization, or gang, should be resisted to the utmost. Mental reservations do not render submission any more tolerable.

. . . . It is beside the point to refer to "life force," "*élan vital*," or the like, as outside the range of science. Is "growth" (as the unfolding of a plant seed or the development of an animal egg) to be placed there because we cannot explain it? The fact is that science mostly does not explain; it merely describes.

We accept growth from the embryonic to the mature state as a fact of life, as we do also the deterioration and death of the individual. Why not accept the equally evident: development, prime, senescence, and extinction of species? Accepting those facts (not pretending to explain them), we need only apply in the biological world the law of variation (apparently universal), the countervailing principle of inertia (or the tendency of things to keep on going the way they are going), the working out of the law of averages (considering the usually large numbers of individuals and the multiplicity of reasons for their elimination), and of entropy (all systems finally run down) to have as



reasonable an understanding as we are ever likely to have of evolution as it seems to be.

Phrases can be selected from each side of the debate to fit this solution, as it is rational and naturalistic and is to be accepted as a natural fact. It is in the attempt to explain, and to defend a certain explanation as the only true gospel that men get into inextricable difficulties.

W. L. MCATEE.

Chicago, Ill.

Rabbi Lewis Replies

SIR: As a matter of personal privilege, please allow me to reply to John Mason Brown, who attacks me quite sharply in his column in the issue of March 12. I am as bitterly opposed to censorship as he is. However, it is my contention that the motion-picture medium is in a category radically different from that of the printed word. Even the latter often presents unusual and complicated problems, as the current discussion touching comic books clearly indicates.

Neither the New York Board of Rabbis nor I has sought to exclude "Oliver Twist" from any library. What my colleagues and I have resisted, and will continue to do so, is the release of the Rank screen version of "Oliver Twist," because it is not true to the text of Dickens, and therefore calculated to arouse the embers of anti-Semitism and race prejudice. While I have not seen the picture, competent judges like Albert Deutsch and others have seen it and condemned it as violently anti-Semitic and as certain to stimulate anti-Jewish hate. That riots did follow wherever "Oliver Twist" was exhibited, proves how sound this judgment was.

While Jews have never sought to suppress "The Merchant of Venice," there is no sound reason why high schools are obligated to select for class instruction that comedy which is most derogatory and hateful to Jews. As I would not deny anyone the right to read "The Merchant of Venice," neither would I force it upon anyone. How this attitude becomes "censorship" eludes me.

RABBI THEODORE N. LEWIS.

Brooklyn, N. Y.

Sleeping FPA

SIR: To FPA and *SRL*:
May one inquire why in hell
Adams, with *SRL*'s permission,
Says, when he means "conjunction,"
"preposition"?
Indignor quando Frank *dormitat*
At things he's usually bright at.

JOHN W. CLARK.

Minneapolis, Minn.

Parlez-moi de Parlograms

SIR: *Aux Galeries Lafayette*: Lafayette, we are upstairs.
L'apres-midi d'un faun: buzz me this p.m.

CHARLES FOLTZ, JR.

Washington, D. C.

SIR: *Donnez-moi le beurre*: you give me the chills.

ENSIGN H. A. WEISS, *USN*,
USS Amphion (AR-13).

Norfolk, Va.

SIR: *Le colporteur est arrivé de nouveau*: Cole Porter's come up with a new one.
O.K. Louis, drapes la gonne. Maintenant, chansons "London derrière."
Pardonnez les bum mots.

BARBARA LORD.

South Coventry, Conn.

SIR: *Hic jacet*: drinking jacket.

LILIAN JACKSON BRAUN.

Detroit, Mich.

SIR: It shouldn't happen to a chien, but here goes:
Cinq heures: doughnuts.
Mangez-vous: lousy scenery.
Pousse café: restaurant cat.
Trois heures: pants.
Back to oeuvre.

DOROTHY GRAY.

Sioux Falls, S. D.

SIR: *La jeunesse au front radiant*: June is bustin' out all over!

ANNE MARIE GREENE.

Sunnyside, N. Y.

SIR: Your . . . French translations brought joy to my heart and tears of merriment to my eyes. . . .
Fais do-do: make lots of money.
Noblesse oblige: the nobility always comes across.

ELLEN JANE L. PORTER.

Dayton, O.

SIR: *Vous avez déjeuné?*: Do you know my birthday?

EMILE VAN VLIET,
Managing Editor,
Pocket Books, Inc.

New York, N. Y.

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Religion. *The torrent of books on theology and faith which steadily pours from the presses—quantitatively religious titles regularly rank near the top of non-fiction books published—vividly illustrates man's desire to have the verities restated in contemporary terms. The two books reviewed here, though notable for other reasons, do not serve present-day readers in this way, and so are partial failures. Robert Sencourt's "Great Writers of the World," as Edith Hamilton comments, "enthusiastically and ably" restates the teachings of St. Paul, but unlike St. Paul does not make Christianity seem particularly applicable to mid-twentieth-century problems. Leo Tolstoy's "The Law of Love and the Law of Violence" is interesting only as the work of an aged literary figure, but here again his viewpoint is suited only to a now vanished world.*

The Mouthpiece of God

GREAT WRITERS OF THE WORLD: SAINT PAUL. By Robert Sencourt. New York: Sheed & Ward. 1948. 378 pp. $3.50.

Reviewed by EDITH HAMILTON

THIS is a well-written and often vividly written book, giving an account of all that is known and all that may reasonably be imagined about St. Paul. Mr. Sencourt's reading has been comprehensive; the list of his authorities is impressive. All St. Paul's great commentators are there, and the many quotations from them are a valuable addition to the book.

St. Paul is presented as the Church has always seen him, the mouthpiece of God, speaking the words of God. It appears to the reviewer that this is the reason why no consideration is given to passages which are incomprehensible to many readers today. For instance, the picture in the ninth chapter of Romans of an angry, irresponsible God, an early Hebrew idea abandoned by the great prophets, is completely passed over—and yet statements of this order are important because they have obscured Paul's greatness to numberless people. Not one of them is discussed by Mr. Sencourt. The familiar stumbling block, St. Paul's view of marriage, is passed over so easily it really does not come in sight. The words that the unmarried alone can please God and that marriage is permissible only as a provision against lust, are not quoted by Mr. Sencourt but translated or rather transfigured into an elevated as well as most reasonable teaching: "That there are in the single life special opportunities for freer devotion to God, but also special temptations: and each Christian must do as he is guided first by nature and common sense, then by his spiritual aptitudes." In view of this interpretation it is not surprising that Mr. Sencourt is able to conclude that St. Paul's idea of the married and the unmarried state "is accepted universally by those who wish to live a moral life."

Enough has been said to show that the book follows strictly the old ways. The tone is devotional and real criticism never obtrudes. It is true that the reasons for and against ascribing the doubtful epistles to St. Paul are in each case fully given, with, however, the verdict that they are all his, even the Epistle to the Hebrews, although in this case not without some qualifications.

There is nothing new in the picture Mr. Sencourt paints, but it is warmed and vivified by a glowing devotion and admiration which lift it out of the class of the commonplace. The author has evidently followed in St. Paul's footsteps everywhere he traveled and he describes scene after scene as if it were hallowed because almost 2,000 years ago those eyes beheld it. The descriptions are so good, the emotion which pervades them is so moving, that they bridge over the centuries. St. Paul comes to life; the reader is seeing just what he once saw.

—*Michelangelo.*

Detail from "The Conversion of St. Paul."

It is a book which will be welcomed by many. Nothing is more acceptable than long-cherished opinions enthusiastically and ably presented. It will arouse no stirring of disapproval. Neither will it give any help to those who are longing to have Christianity restated for today, in modern terms, exactly as St. Paul did for his day.

Edith Hamilton, after serving twenty years as headmistress of the Bryn Mawr School at Baltimore, retired to write such successful interpretations of the past as "The Greek Way" and "The Roman Way."

Weapon Against Evil

THE LAW OF LOVE AND THE LAW OF VIOLENCE. By Leo Tolstoy. New York: Rudolph Field and Gaer Assoc. 1948. 130 pp. $3.

Reviewed by GORHAM MUNSON

AN unsigned note, inserted by the publisher, tells us very little about the composition of this fragment by Tolstoy, heretofore unpublished in English. One gathers that its slackly organized text was jotted down after Tolstoy was eighty and that it appeared in Paris in a French translation before Tolstoy died at eighty-two in 1910. A Russian author named Halperine-Kaminsky is said to have secured the manuscript and to have made the French translation. It was never published in Russian, and hence has not been included in the English translation of Tolstoy's collected works. Mary Koutouzow Tolstoy's translation is from the French, not from the original manuscript.

The little book is an octogenarian performance of slight interest. Thirty years earlier Tolstoy had passed through his famous and profound crisis when he had asked himself about his life: "What is it for? What does it lead to?" He had arrived at his answer: the rejection of institutional religion and full reliance on the words of Jesus as he understood them. Following those words, he had become anti-State in his outlook and a preacher of non-resistance. The cardinal principle of Jesus he took to be love. "The Law of Love and the Law of Violence" reaffirms and repeats what he had written with greater vigor in the years following

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his spiritual crisis. In fact, the strongest chapter in it is an extended quotation from something Tolstoy had written fifteen years earlier when he was about sixty-five.

It is well known that Tolstoy's health was failing in his last years and that these years were disfigured by squabbles with his family and his disciples. "The Law of Love and the Law of Violence" is evidence of impaired powers. In a rambling way, it argues that the Christian conception of life was far in advance of the pagan world and was accepted in form only while peoples continued to live in a pagan way. Mankind must know how to break these forms of Christianity, renounce paganism, and live by the "law of love." A kind of roll of honor of the martyrs of non-resistance is called, and a general appeal is made to simple people everywhere to cease violence which breeds violence and to practise love as the great weapon against evil. Since Tolstoy expressed his views, the techniques of oppression have become much more thoroughgoing—it is impossible to imagine Stalin tolerating Tolstoy as did the Czar—and the ethical question now turns on the *right use of force*. In a world in which democracy and totalitarianism fight for survival, the Tolstoyan doctrine of non-resistance is for export only to the enemy. The publisher claims timeliness for "The Law of Love and the Law of Violence" but the reader is more likely to think of what a different world it was before World War I.

Gorham Munson, formerly editor for Prentice-Hall, Inc., is author of the forthcoming "The Written Word."

USSR. *Whatever elation Americans might have felt over the Russian decision to lift the blockade of Berlin was sobered by the simultaneous Communist successes in Southern Asia. It is obvious that the war, cold or otherwise, is to continue. What danger is there that it will develop into a shooting war? In his thoughtful if hastily prepared "If Russia Strikes" George Fielding Eliot speculates on the plight of the USA if USSR should go to war soon—even this year. Another book reviewed below, Werner Knop's "Prowling Russia's Forbidden Zone," provides revealing glimpses into conditions behind the Iron Curtain. But, as our reviewers suggest, there is danger that we may take undue comfort from our possession of the atom bomb, from individual accounts of Russian discontent and inefficiency, and from the perhaps temporary failure of the Russians to win the Germans in their occupation zone to Communism.*

Probable Course of Soviet Aggression

IF RUSSIA STRIKES. By George Fielding Eliot. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co. 1949. 252 pp. $2.75.

Reviewed by DONALD ARMSTRONG

SINCE the United States is concentrating so much of its economic, political, military, and moral forces to establish a stable equilibrium between East and West, it is most timely to examine the influences that might upset the precarious balance. We should be aware of the risks, the probabilities, and the possibilities in the international situation. Major Eliot's book is an effective analysis of the probable course of Russian aggression if she goes to war, and of the best military policy for this country to meet such an attack. Major Eliot is a competent authority to discuss the military-political forces involved, and this readable book is readily comprehensible to the layman for whom he writes.

Major Eliot points out that the initiative for war or peace is Russia's. To strike or not to strike is the question. The dilemma facing the Kremlin requires a decision that cannot escape the consequences of two definite trends: Russia is losing the cold war; and the military odds against her are increasing at an accelerating pace. Today Russia is the dominant land power of the world, but in sea and air power and in the atomic bomb and long-range aviation the United States and its associated powers are superior. The hundreds of Russian divisions under arms could doubtless overrun most of Europe and the Near East if a shooting war started in 1949. On the other hand, Major Eliot thinks, perhaps too optimistically, that during the current year with our atomic bombs we could destroy Russian capacity to produce the weapons of war, and destroy it for good. In 1952, or soon thereafter, each country will have a stock of atomic bombs and war will be effectively internecine. Both East and West, therefore, face the necessity for making extremely difficult decisions. Timing is all-important, for the situation shifts from day to day. The military variables are changing. While Western Europe and Turkey develop their power on land, Russia is making progress in long-range bombing planes and, no doubt, in the development and production of the atomic bomb.

Major Eliot's estimate of the situation is based on sound knowledge and thoughtful weighing of known facts. He shows the relative strength of the

—Seibel in The Richmond Times-Dispatch.

"Anything up your sleeve?"

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two conflicting groups. His balance sheet is based on material factors alone, on mere numbers, which would certainly count in the opening stages of any war. One should bear in mind that Major Eliot is considering

> . . . a war not of the distant, but of the immediate future. In such a war, the chief weapon of air power will still be the piloted aircraft. In such a war, ground forces of all arms (infantry, armored troops, artillery, engineers) will still have a part to play. In such a war, the command of the sea will still be of vital importance, and to be secured only by adequate naval forces. The guided missile, rocket or jet-propelled, will surely be used, but it will have neither the range nor the accuracy to make it a weapon of decision. . . .
>
> But there is one weapon which, if it is used, will indeed give the side which alone possesses it a disproportionate advantage—an advantage so great as to be almost an assurance of victory. That weapon is the atomic bomb and its offspring, combined with the long reach of heavy bombing aircraft or of ship-borne naval aircraft.

In spite of this fact, the danger that Russia may fight in 1949 arises from the accumulating evidence that the Politburo is losing the cold war. Major Eliot is convinced that losing the cold war "would probably mean political, and perhaps personal, extinction for the present leaders of the Soviet Union." If this assumption were correct, a war in 1949 might be a possibility. The reader, however, must conclude from Major Eliot's arguments that the danger of war in 1949 is comparatively slight.

The author agrees with the point of view that defense today means attack. If Russia strikes, we cannot sit behind a radar screen or anti-aircraft guns awaiting developments. These defense measures are needed, of course, but we must be ready to use immediately the military superiority of this nation in the air and at sea to counter any Russian aggression. Air power today is the dominant arm in war. This power, with the atomic bomb, is the one deterrent that might prevent war with Russia in the next few years. In the meantime, the reader of this book will learn the useful lesson from an exceptionally qualified expert that foreign policy and military policy are so interrelated that it is impossible to consider one independently of the other.

Donald Armstrong, who was a brigadier-general when he retired from the U. S. Army, served as commandant of the Army Industrial College during World War II. At present he is president of the United States Pipe and Foundry Company.

Exposed Frontier

PROWLING RUSSIA'S FORBIDDEN ZONE: A Secret Journey Into Soviet Germany. By Werner Knop. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. 1949. 200 *pp.* $2.75.

Reviewed by MARTIN EBON

THIS colorful story of one man's secret travels through the Russian-occupied zone of Germany is well worth preserving between the covers of a book; much of it appeared earlier in *The Saturday Evening Post.* Werner Knop, who was born in Germany and could easily masquerade as an inhabitant of Soviet Germany, sneaked from the British into the Russian zone in the Harz mountain area. He traveled to Weimar and Jena (where the Zeiss works are), to Leipzig (where he took a look at the Leuna industries), and finally into those parts of Saxony that contain labor camps and uranium mines.

All this took daring and courage. It was distinctly off the beaten track. The author's accounts of narrow escapes make a good story all by themselves. They make, in fact, the best part of his story. Much of the rest is, and has to be, more or less pedestrian. It was difficult enough just to get into the Soviet zone, to move around in it, and to get out again—without making any earth-shaking discoveries; much of the atmosphere, of Communist-Russian governing technique, and of anti-American propaganda, has already leaked out of Soviet Germany.

Traveling with forged documents, Knop had a number of close shaves. But his friends had done their forging well—so well that one not too literate Russian soldier used him as an authority to get some pork from a farmer. At Chemnitz, Knop picked up grim gossip about the uranium mines: super-secrecy; high death rate among the workers; inhumanly long working hours; but nevertheless a large output of pitchblende, which is shipped to the Soviet Union. Inasmuch as a great many workers have managed to flee from these mines into the American zone, Washington ought to have a pretty good idea of the whole set-up; however, it is well not to take such fact-finding efficiency for granted.

Possibly the most informative part of the book deals not with the author's impressions in the Soviet zone, but with his talks in the Moschendorf camp in the U. S.-controlled region. There, Germans and Russians who had succeeded in escaping from the East talked freely about their experiences, and Knop's travels had

equipped him with a good understanding of their attitudes. The fight for survival had marked these men and women; the cruel features of life in the Eastern zone are revealed in terms of human despair.

Knop's conclusions are similar to those of other observers: he found much self-pity, arrogance, and resentment in the Western sector, and little appreciation of Germany's own role in the process of wrecking Europe anywhere. Like others, he observed that a new confidence has changed earlier submissiveness into garrulous nationalism. He does not believe that the Germans are ready for parliamentary self-government.

The Western powers cannot withdraw their armed forces from Germany, Knop believes, without opening the way for a Soviet-controlled united Germany. If the Soviets should withdraw their troops from the Eastern zone, they will do so only after they have made sure that a Communist regime will take over the whole of Germany. Knop found the Soviet zone "drained and empty." It has become a liability, now that industries are dismantled, skilled workers lacking, and machinery worn out.

The author believes that Germany is the most exposed frontier of the United States and the British Commonwealth. The book leaves the reader to ponder over the failure of America's attempt to make its zone over in the image of the USA, as well as over Russia's lack of success in turning Germany, during the past four years, into a long-range asset. One thing seems sure: the Soviet Union will not cease in its attempt to convert Germany to Communism; but, a few years hence, a disappointed America might make the isolationist mistake of trying to write its German venture off as a bad investment. By then, a "united" Soviet Germany may still become a reality.

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Poetry.

An exciting variety seems to characterize the books of poetry discussed below. Love of literature as a mirror to life, and more than a lamp's glow cast upon erudition, sets apart the work of a new poet, Hyam Plutzik, and an older and lighter versifier, Vincent Starrett. The tang of Irish observation, where the phrase is usually unusual, is found in "New Irish Poets," while James Broughton writes a modern morality play in nonsense rhyme and parody. Francis Hulme brings folk-music to the service of poetry. Others are more traditional. What is demonstrated is that poetry can draw upon various sources for inspiration, that, as Scott Fitzgerald averred, there is everywhere "abundance of material," if one is gifted with insight and thoroughly alive.

New Light on Certain Characters

BRILLIG. By Vincent Starrett. Chicago: The Dierkes Press. 1949. 55 *pp.* $2.

Reviewed by SARA HENDERSON HAY

VINCENT STARRETT'S latest collection of sonnets and verse is enlivened by a sportive imagination and a pleasant wit. A well-known bibliophile, and the author of several delightful books about books, Mr. Starrett enjoys casting new light on certain familiar literary characters and situations. "A Hiss for Cinderella" gravely proposes that the elder sisters have been much maligned and Cinderella herself ("A pumpkin coach, forsooth, and lizard footmen!") a scheming minx; "A Ballad of Brobdingnag" relates with gusto the adventures of one of Gulliver's companions who preferred to stay behind with the giant ladies; Adam, outside the Garden, absolves Eve:

You ate, and gave the blushing fruit to me;
And I—I caught and kissed you then.
Ah well,
Let me confess: I was not wholly blind . . .
You were already somewhat on my mind.

The clever burlesque of Sherlock Holmes and Mother Goose, in "The Adventure of the Empty Cupboard," where the Hubbard woman testifies that

near the cupboard certain prints were found:
They were the footprints of a gigantic hound!

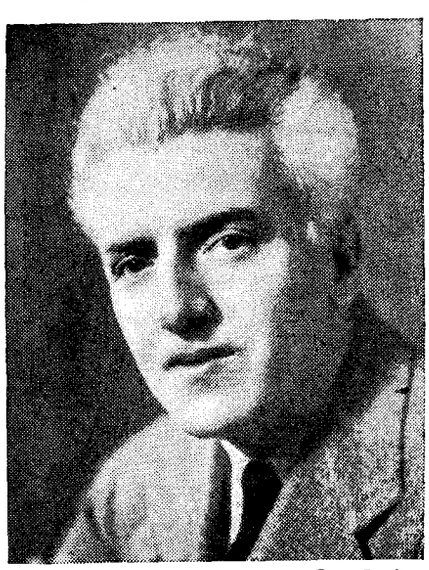
must have delighted the Baker Street Irregulars.

It is in the happy collaboration of bibliophile and Muse that Mr. Starrett excels.

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.
I love thee as I do an Elzivir.
Pickwicks in Parts do not my pulses stir
As thy sweet parts. . . .

Thou lovelier than Ashendene or Fell. . . .

A few of the sonnets about the contemporary scene are marred by a rather labored sophistication; "Ungentlemanly Reminder" and "Zoological Note," for instance, are merely *Vers de Café Société;* and some of the subjective lyrics are too gently conventional and nostalgic, without much real force or individuality. But these are in the minority. Mr. Starrett's genuine gift is to infuse the mock-serious with a poignant significance; to suggest with a verbal shrug or lifted eyebrow a heartstruck emotion. The grace and provocative wit of "Brillig" is tempered by the deeper



—Don Loving.

Vincent Starrett—"with a verbal shrug a heartstruck emotion."

note of pathos and irony, as in the sonnet "Deathbed":

This dying man, good people, at whose bed
You gather, moved by decent grief, is he
Who thought in childhood he might go to sea,
But went to school reluctantly instead;
Ran with his fellows, feared the dark, and read
Great books with pleasure; at his mother's knee
Said simple prayers, and questioned endlessly
The paradox of kindly people dead.

So long ago! This man is white and old.
How rich in wisdom one who lived so long,
You say conventionally; but you are wrong;
Age solves no riddles—and the tale is told,
Always it is the little boy that dies,
All his unanswered questions in his eyes.

Current and Celtic

NEW IRISH POETS: Representative Selections from the Work of 37 Contemporaries. Edited by Devin A. Garrity. New York: Devin Adair Co. 1949. 209 *pp.* $3.50.

Reviewed by PADRAIC COLUM

VERY seldom does one come on a collection of verse that can be read on and on as one reads an interesting prose volume: the customary anthology, even the anthology devoted to a single period, has contrasts of idea, personality, technique that hold up the continuity of our reading. "New Irish Poets," surprisingly, has a sort of harmony that permits us to read it on and on. That may be due to editorship or it may be due to the fact that the poets have the same country in their minds and the same sort of things.

Anyway, the transitions from the work of one to another poet are not abrupt. This does not mean there are not superior poets and superior poems in the collection; it does not mean there are not poems that are stranger than others (Austin Clarke's are strange in theme and technique in this company). These are Irish poets and none of them have forgotten that poetry is made to be said or sung and so do not dispense with distinguishable music and rhythm or overlook the distinct image. They make their poems about known persons such as farmers or old sailors, and mention fields and inlets of the sea, gardens, lakes, hills, villages, and glens; they bring into them herons, gulls, corncrakes, blackbirds, curlews, starlings. Those schooled in Irish poetry who

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come to this anthology expecting to find in it something of the Celtic twilight will be surprised to discover that there is little left over from the older poets. These poets—the greater number, anyway—live in their own time and there is a certain activism in their values:

Two things have some tincture of Eternity—
The sound of Brendan's bell, and the sloughed-off pelt of a wild swan.

Devin A. Garrity has done a good job of editing these thirty-seven poets, whose work has been taken from various recent magazines and little-known collections, and the Devin Adair publishers, who are specializing in Irish books, have done a good job in production.

Comment, Song, Philosophy & Ideas

BIRD AT NIGHT. By Marion Ethel Hamilton. New York: Fine Editions Press. 1949. 63 *pp.* $2.50.

COME UP THE VALLEY. By Francis Pledger Hulme. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press. 1949. 92 *pp.* $3.

INTIMATION and Other Poems 1941-47. *By H. M. Margoliouth. New York: Oxford University Press.* 1949. 54 *pp.* $2.

THE PLAYGROUND. By James Broughton. Drawing by Zev. San Francisco: The Centaur Press. 1949. *Unpaged.* $2.50.

Reviewed by A. M. SULLIVAN

IN HER third book, Marion Ethel Hamilton continues to be the poet of lyrical comment on the immediate world around her. This personal approach reveals the best of Mrs. Hamilton's talent, and her limitations as well. She exhibits a technical skill in the sonnet form, and her better poems are in the Shakespearean pattern. Her most interesting sonnet is "The Wheel of Time," in which man is "no more than the shadow of bird." The rest of the lyrics are the recording of local griefs, sympathies, and enthusiasms, which rise a trifle over the level of competency. Exceptions, however, are "Sea Garden," which is musical, original, and impersonal, and "Elegy," which has a valid emotion, in which we share as the woman returns where

There is only the ghost of the house, a hole in air—
But she will see what no one else has seen.

The ballads of Francis Pledger Hulme recall favorably and pleasantly the earlier voices of Roy Helton and Jesse Stuart. Mr. Hulme, who is a gifted musician, offers stage directions with his mountain poems. He has assigned the guitar, for instance, to his "Bantie Ballad." The verses call for rapid singing, and the battle between the sharp-spurred bantam cock and Satan is a verbal exercise of high order. The most adroit of the mountain songs is the "Flower Ballad" (for the dulcimer), which offers a rhymed botanical catalogue of the Blue Ridge Hills in summer. In the section devoted to formal lyrics, Hulme indicates a sensitivity to nature and the natural order of events. In "Sesame" he asks us to

Find the alembic in the leaf
That distills the grave from grief;
That sets at peace the tortured will
Crying in green, be still, be still.

Hulme attempts some conversational city pieces, which are a sophisticated, stream-of-consciousness type of poetry. In these he is not as sure of his craft or material as he is in the lively ballads, or in the fine spun lyrics and sonnets. The sonnet group, which closes the volume, is well wrought, although the poet mixes the traditional rhyme patterns, which may annoy the formal sonneteers of the Petrarchian school. The first sonnet begins with an interesting idea:

To build with words is but to whip the air
And conjure architecture out of rain.

Where Mr. Hulme is a singer with an ear to the bird song of the Appalachians, Mr. Margoliouth is an English philosopher who devises in poetic form a compact medium for his contemplation. H. M. Margoliouth's ideas are often didactic and occasionally prosy. They are a bit of an antidote to the metaphysical conundrums which have poured into our ears for a decade or more from other English bards to whom this Oxford poet is evidently a stranger. Though the verses have a faint intramural odor, we are quite satisfied to say, "Go on, we're listening." Rarely, but quite effectively, Margoliouth breaks away from his gnomic pattern of statement and opinion, and includes the lyrical note, as in his "St. Albans Cathedral," where he recalls the great hymns that have risen for centuries among the Norman piers. Occasionally the metaphysical subject changes to the natural. Here is the "English Fog":

Wherein I pace
Untroubled in a peace that comes about
From this deliverance to one time and place.

"The Playground" is a modern morality play, which employs nonsense rhyme, Mother Goose parody, and children's street jingles to convey in an oblique manner its criticism of "man's inhumanity to man." Mr. Broughton embarks on a difficult, but successful, double-talk mission. A second and third reading of the play enlarges the concept, even if the language is at times poor doggerel.

In this tableau of a world facing destruction from the atom bomb, we follow the poet's ironic shafts at the dull, stenciled mind of commerce, at the confused abracadabra of science, at the detailed folly of the bureaucrat. Only the dreamer, the lover, the idealist as typified in the balloon man, the ice-cream girl, and the handy boy, have any spiritual understanding of a higher destiny.

Our Mother Goose rhymes are thinly veiled satires on forgotten politicians and clergymen of the reign of Henry VIII and its turbulent aftermath. James Broughton in his shyness depicts types rather than individuals, and occasionally one of his characters rises to poetic eloquence. The antiphonal speech of the balloon man against the half-heard Sermon on the Mount is a climactic situation in the play. Some of the poet's subtleties are lost in word mimicry that mixes symbol and reality, but for the most part, his carom shots hit home, and pink the hides of the cowardly bargainers who would sell their souls for a slave's security.

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Horror of the Obvious

ASPECTS OF PROTEUS. By Hyam Plutzik. New York: Harper & Bros. 1949. 94 pp. $2.50.

Reviewed by HOWARD GRIFFIN

A KIND of universal inquisitiveness and warm detachment should be part of every poet's equipment but these qualities are—unfortunately—absent from these poems, so many of which are rooted in books. Narrowness of vision restricts this poet's focus largely to poetized historical criticism, comment on religious texts, literary probing, although the final poem, "Death at the Purple Rim," breaks away from thin introspection and develops a personal, penetrating, and unpretentious vein.

Under the delusion that certain types of subject matter "belong to" certain types of media, poets have for a long time now neglected the potentialities of subject matter in favor of mere stylistic experimentation. By making particular areas of life tabu to treatment, poetry for a while ceased to be an organic force. Above all, the poet should ferret out and transmute recalcitrant material rather than deal, as in the past, with the academic and the abstract. Scott Fitzgerald in one of his letters remarks, "So many writers have been aided by being brought up in a métier unrelated to literature. It gives an abundance of material and, more important, an attitude from which to view the world."

"Aspects of Proteus" is not as faceted as its title would seem to indicate. What is lacking in this book is "abundance of material" and "an attitude from which to view the world." Even the titles—"Dostoevski, Proust and the Others," "Those Who Write After Freud," "Elaboration on a Phrase of Rabelais," etc.—reveal the marginality of approach. Moved by "horror of the obvious," Mr. Plutzik appears to believe that "to be devious is the safest course." Repeatedly he tries to make an analysis of poetic creativity into a poem—an almost impossible task. A burning, intent love of books and tenderness toward the craft of writing infuse several poems, and one or two of the nature lyrics ("Patterns of Earth," "Spring of Lilac") quite succeed.

The sum-effect of these poems, to me, was one of excitement and perplexity. Mr. Plutzik must learn to turn outward from this "improvisation before an empty house"; must learn to seize the world less impersonally and more passionately if he is to achieve a poem that is not an étude.

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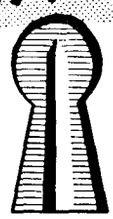

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THE CASE AGAINST ROOTS

(Continued from page 8)

ment of England inherits from generations of men who have put class before country, but were too stupid even to keep healthy and intact the milch-cow of their privileged order.

The ruler is traditionally anything but a rooted person. Kings had roots in every country, just like a modern American, and so had many nobles too. It was only poor Hodge who was quite certain to have a good firm root. The higher you went in the social scale—when Europe was "Christendom" prior to the nationalist era—the less the root business would have any meaning.

Today the parliamentary rulers, who have succeeded the kings and archdukes, take every opportunity of traveling outside their national frontiers. Their roots must get frayed a good bit from so much moving about, and this is in general an excellent sign. We should always welcome movement of any kind.

Now I arrive at the goal of these particular observations. The "rootless Elysium," as I have called it, enjoyed by the great polyglot herds in the American cities, is what will come to exist everywhere after universalism is established: after the final change-over from a plurality of competitive nationalist societies to one great cosmic society. And for the new principle of brotherhood, and the essential de-snobbing of the various racial stocks, we can depend, I suggest, upon the atom bomb. It sounds ridiculous put in that way. But all our behavior is ridiculous, and there is no rational road to a more sensible world.

When that change has been effected, it is obvious that there cannot but be an immense *relaxation* of the kind experienced by the earlier immigrants to the United States. Consider how the elimination of one great department of our political life labeled "Foreign Affairs," with its corollary, "War," would revolutionize our lives. The change would be far greater than it is easy to imagine. Were we informed that our span of life was henceforth extended to an average of 200—the man of forty becoming the man of 100—that would have a very great effect upon our lives, would it not? But hardly greater than will this change I am discussing.

Few people are conscious how much space all that stupid activity occupies, what is called "defense" or "security." Nor is it quantitative only. It does not merely with its brutal bulk monopolize the space allowed for us to live in. It impregnates and colors everything about it: the shape of our minds is determined by it. Literature, and some of the greatest of it, is filled with an obsessional tension. Men are shown there as little fighting animals, whose lot it is to fight other little animals like themselves—and nothing else. Philosophers whom we have been taught to regard as among the wisest of mankind are no exceptions.

PLATO, in his "Republic," for example, reduced human life in society to a military problem. The only state he was able to imagine was a "sovereign state," as we call it today, all of the life of which was conditioned by *other* sovereign states, next to which its citizens dwelt in a tense watchfulness, armed to the teeth. So grim, and cruelly dull, a pattern of a state could never have occurred to him had Plato lived in a world in which state sovereignty had been abolished, or had never existed.

Let us imagine, however, this republic of Plato's in full swing—should the conception of the state embodied in it have been adopted, and such a state been set up in Attica or elsewhere. Then let us suppose that as a result of some tremendous catastrophe (such a disaster for the human race as a war in which atomic bombs were freely used in large numbers, half of the population of the world wiped out), the "sovereign state" was at last abolished. What would happen to the republic on the Platonic model, just established? An immense relaxation would, of necessity, at once ensue: an abrupt deflation of the entire social structure. Its constitution would be from that moment quite meaningless—its purpose, in the new dispensation, unattainable. For men would have abandoned the age-old habit of mutual slaughter. To subordinate everything in life to *that* would now, fortunately, have become criminal, just as it would be to wipe out the family in the neighboring flat, or to bludgeon to death the rival tailor, or apothecary, across the road. To subordinate free speculation, art (Plato would have abolished free speech and free creation), the delights of the family (Plato would have

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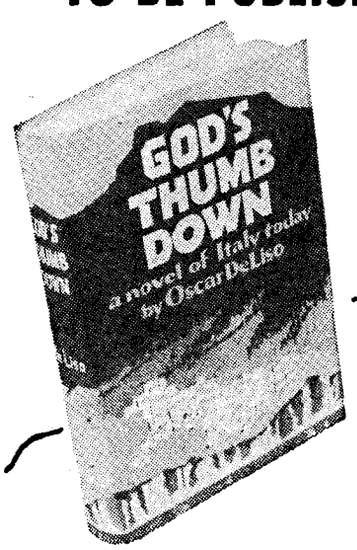

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made women public, and so destroyed the family), and all the adjuncts of a happy life to a program of power would now be regarded as maniacal, and be dealt with accordingly. Your neighbor has unexpectedly become your brother. You might train to defeat him at bridge or chess, or excel him in the rugged splendor of your rock garden, but you might no longer plot and prepare to take his life.

The relaxation would be almost painful—like the blood bursting into an arm long constricted: or like a Trappist's tongue beginning eagerly to move, the vow of silence suddenly canceled. All the springs that had held you tensed up, like a fierce tomcat upon a dark night, would snap. No longer would one have to be ashamed of the pursuit of happiness!

It is with great diffidence that anyone today mentions such a thing as *happiness*. And the Puritan is still with us, to chide us, if we speak of pleasure. A famous American political lady, in face of the universal destruction that threatens us at the hands of heavy water, delivered herself of the aphorism—"Either men must love each other or die." As an improvement on that I suggest the following: "Either men must pursue happiness, or perish." There is no middle course.

"Austerity" of the sort we English are now practising is a path toward universal destruction. "Pull in your belt" is a slogan closely related to "gird up your loins," or the guns-butter metaphor. It is fight-talk language. Let us call to mind—for it may save us—the saying of William Blake: "Curse braces—Bless relaxes." Which is the moral of all my foregoing arguments.

Let us hope that minds will gradually turn toward the cosmic, or universalist, age ahead. I know, of course, that any doctrine such as I advocate is liable to be called something like "cosmopolitanism" and criticized as unpatriotic. When you hear that, all you need do is to recall the bloody path along which the great "patriots" of all great nations have led us. Let us pray for the rise of "cosmopolitanism," rather than more of the same patriotic poison.

Wyndham Lewis has for many years occupied a conspicuous place in British artistic life as a novelist, essayist, and editor of "little" magazines. His paintings hang in the leading English museums. Mr. Lewis was born in Maine (of English parents) and lived in this country during World War II. His regard for the land of his birth is revealed in "America and Cosmic Man," which Doubleday is publishing early next month. This article is drawn from that book.

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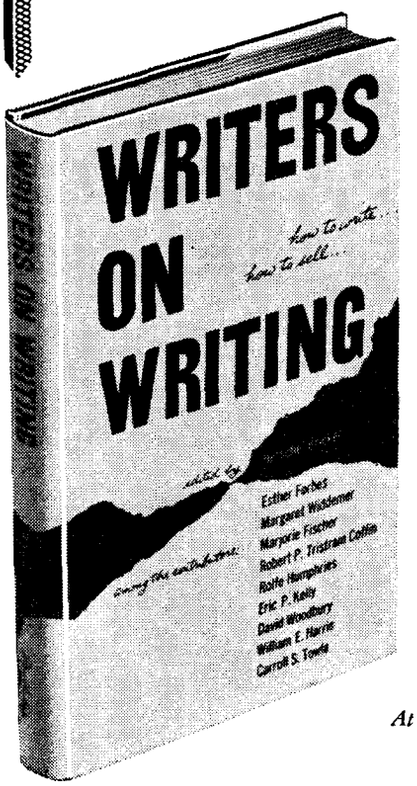

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Seeing Things

DEUS IN MACHINA

WHEN once it gives itself over to the cops-and-robbers stuff which is its real business, "The Traitor"* becomes an exciting melodrama about Soviet spies, atomic secrets, and the United States' being saved by the Naval Intelligence.

An exciting melodrama which is frankly a thriller-diller is a good thing to have around, and nowadays a rare one. There was a time when such spine-twisters were common enough. How good they were; how scary, for example, "The Bat" or "The Cat and the Canary" would seem today, I tremble to think. But there is a place, a definite and a treasured place, for such unhingers of the vertebrae. Certainly, the heartbeats of most playgoers with longish memories quicken at the mere mention of "Rope's End," "The Last Mile," "The Criminal Code," "Payment Deferred," "Dangerous Corner," "Criminal-at-Large," "Kind Lady," "Night Must Fall," or "Ladies in Retirement."

No doubt the movies, accustomed as they are to blame, must bear their share of the responsibility for the present long-standing drought. Being better equipped to handle such shenanigans scenically, they have to a large extent gobbled up this form, even as they have gobbled up so much else. Indeed, the last topnotch melodrama of the shiver-and-quake school which I remember seeing on Broadway was "Angel Street," and that was seven-and-a-half years ago, two days before the Japs struck at Pearl Harbor.

During most of a leisurely first act "The Traitor" may overreach itself by attempting to deal with such large and vital subjects as loyalty, academic freedom, nationalism, and Russo-American relations. But once Lee Tracy makes his entrance as a Navy captain; once the mild, old professor's study, which is the scene of Herman Wouk's play, begins to swarm with sailors turned investigators; once it becomes clear that an important young scientist, for whatever reasons of his own, is in cahoots with the Communists; and a Geiger counter—a real one, mind you—starts ticking away to indicate the presence of top-secret atomic materials, why then the evening begins to do its wanted damage to the nerves.

A Geiger counter is a mysterious contraption. Battleship gray in color, it resembles nothing so much as a medium-sized portable radio. It is concerned, however, with more serious matters than commercials, comedians, songs, or soap operas. It is a kind of lie detector for inanimate substances. Instead of laying bare the secrets of the human heart, it exposes the nearness of those elements at whose mercy human lives now continue. A cross between radar and radio, it is one of the newer gadgets of this Frankenstein age. It proves how the imaginative invention of Jules Verne or H. G. Wells has become the practical actuality of today.

Seeing this Geiger counter at work and listening to its telltale tick-tick-tick, I found myself forced to think back to another melodrama I had seen long, long ago. It, too, relied on an ultramodern mechanism, as is the rightful and happy tradition of such thrillers. But the difference between that earlier machine and the one speaking for the new day in "The Traitor" is a measure of how frighteningly far we have come. I dare not use the word "progressed."

It was at Macauley's in Louisville, a glorious old theatre now as vanished as the world of 1913, that thirty-six years ago I bit my nails before this other melodrama. It was called "The Argyle Case"; its star was Robert Hilliard; and no less a sleuth than William J. Burns had cooperated in its writing. Its plot, which had to do with catching some counterfeiters while solving a murder, was as dependent as is "The Traitor's" on the latest scientific apparatus. This was an incredible something prominently displayed in the lobby and no less prominently employed on the stage. Although we know it today as the dictaphone, it was then known as the "dictagraph." From an afternoon long since blurred in my memory, it stands out as the sole vivid recollection.

IN "The Traitor" a dictaphone is also used. In or out of the theatre, it is old hat now. In these wire-tapping days, when no one can be certain his telephone has not for the moment become a party line, a dictaphone is taken for granted. No doubt, in itself this makes its own wry comment on the times and the extent to which they are out of joint. A Geiger counter is quite a different matter. It is still novel enough to be melodramatic in its own right. It is another shuddery reminder of how much more mysteri-

Lee Tracy and Walter Hampden—"a line that is clean and strong."

*THE TRAITOR, a new play by Herman Wouk. Setting by Raymond Sovey. Directed by Jed Harris. Presented by Mr. Harris. With a cast including Lee Tracy, Walter Hampden, Wesley Addy, Louise Platt, Richard Derr, John Wengraf, James Van Dyk, Philip Coolidge, Maurice Manson, etc., at the Forty-eighth Street Theatre. Opened March 31, 1949.

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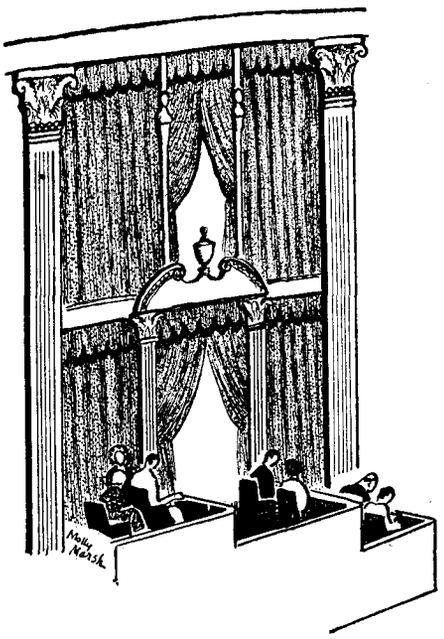

ous the world becomes as the scientists stumble upon the utilization, though not the mastery, of its mysteries.

"The Traitor," however, cannot be accused of being a play which is machine-made. A single gadget, regardless of its strangeness, can no more make a melodrama than one swallow makes a summer. Mr. Wouk as a playwright and Jed Harris as a director are well aware of this. Although they may work the Geiger counter for all the suspense it is worth, it is not the only device of which they take proper advantage. These other devices may be older, but they are still reliable. The switching on or off of lights; the brandishing of revolvers; the arrival of sinister foreign agents with sinister foreign accents; the young officer who proves how bright he is by playing dumb; investigators popping in and out of windows; hurried orders given as the moment for the showdown approaches; the sense communicated of working against time and the threat of death—all these and other such staples contribute to "The Traitor's" effectiveness when, as I say, it gives itself over to playing cops-and-robbers.

COPS-AND-ROBBERS is a diverting game to watch in the theatre provided those playing it do so well enough. If Mr. Harris is much better at it than Mr. Wouk, it is because Mr. Harris, after all, comes to it as a past-master. No one of the proper age who is not the victim of amnesia can have forgotten "Broadway" and "The Front Page." Or, for that matter, the luminous sensitivity of Mr. Harris's direction of "The Green Bay Tree." Over the years it stands out as one of the contemporary theatre's memorable productions. It showed how un-

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predictable are the demonstrations of perfect taste and utter gentility. More recently, of course, "The Heiress" has supplied another example of Mr. Harris's informed instinct as a director.

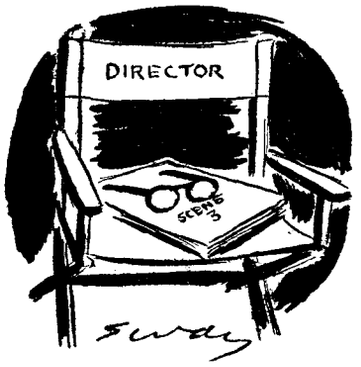
He knows how to draw a line that is clean and strong. His touch is blissfully unmarred by fuzziness. He has an uncanny sense of theatre. It is comparable to a musician's ear or an artist's eye. Although the writing of "The Traitor" may fail him, he never fails it. He stages it throughout as if all of it were first rate, which it is not, and makes it acceptably effective by so doing.

Being an exceptional director, Mr. Harris can bring out the best in his actors no less than in his scripts. Lee Tracy's is a triumphant return to Broadway. The years may have added to his weight, but they have not detracted from his gifts. The surety of his touch, tempo, and manner remains incredible. Every time he enters, Mr. Wouk's play reacts as if to a blood transfusion.

Walter Hampden's professor is warm, winning, and wonderfully human. No headline dealing with a Communist plot could be more frightening than John Wengraf's Soviet agent. And Wesley Addy, always a fine and intelligent actor, proves as the young scientist what a true player can do with an unwritten part. At the moment of being exposed as a traitor, he may respond to his dilemma more like a Shakespearean actor than a supposedly unemotional scientist. At least, by so doing, he creates a "scene" which the author has failed to develop.

Although "The Traitor" may be far from a perfect melodrama, it is an exciting one. That, if I may quote a certain indecisive prince, is a consummation devoutly to be wish'd. Considering the starvation diet of thrillers upon which the theatre has fed us these many years, I can, as an addict of the genre, only rise in Oliver Twist's fashion, approach the managers, and whisper, "Please, sirs, I want some more."

—JOHN MASON BROWN.



The Film Forum

RACE RELATIONS

***The Saturday Review's* Weekly Guide to Selected 16mm. Sound Films.**

EDITOR'S NOTE: *The group of films reviewed for Brotherhood Week gave us a chance to complain that most of the films produced to combat racial and religious bigotry were themselves one-sided or downright unrealistic. It is therefore pleasant to be able to report on a very recent film which gives a well-rounded, true-to-life picture of motives that are at work in every community.*

PREJUDICE

Sponsored jointly by the Protestant Film Commission and the Anti-Defamation League. Produced by Edward L. Dorfmann Productions. Distributed by Motion Picture Sales Corp., 1600 Broadway, New York, in 35mm. only. 16mm. inquiries should be addressed to the Anti-Defamation League, 212 Fifth Ave., New York 10.

This, in brief, is the story of Joe Hanson, thirtyish, white, Protestant, middle-class, of unimpeachable Scandinavian descent, who comes to a new town to take up the job of production manager in a local firm. If you asked him, he would tell you that he was a pretty tolerant sort of fellow. Brought up on the wrong side of the tracks by his immigrant father, he has had to mix with all kinds of folks, and he knows that it takes all kinds to make a world. In fact, he has had to talk sharply to his wife on more than one occasion when she mentioned "a nice district" or "getting away from all those low-class Italians." Joe, in short, seems to be all right. But is he really? What would happen to him under pressure?

In the plant, Joe's subordinate is a temporary employee, Al Green, who happens also to be his neighbor. He is a frank and likable person, and when it turns out that he is also Jewish, what does that matter to Joe? However, Al proves to be a little more capable than Joe would like him to be; he has rather too many ideas for a subordinate, and they are ideas which appeal to the boss, Mr. Baker. Joe soon becomes a prey to all the prejudices he thought he was free of. His job is at stake, he has overspent himself on his house. Now his ears are open to the malicious anti-Semitic gossip of the office.

The day comes when Mr. Baker must decide whether to employ Al permanently. After a bitter struggle with himself, Joe casts the deciding vote against his friend, and Mr. Baker has no other course open than to transfer Al elsewhere. However, he lets Al feel that Joe has stuck up for him, and it is Al's transparent gratitude that starts the anguish of conscience which gradually leads him back to Mr. Baker's office and a request that Al be allowed to stay.

This story is worked out with a good deal of psychological subtlety. Through it moves the impressive figure of the minister at Joe's church, a man who never preaches at him, but tries in the privacy of his home to probe the sources of Joe's hostility in the events of his childhood. A series of convincing flashbacks reveals a common enough pattern—the child who was outplayed at backlot football by "a dirty Jew," who was warned against making friends with "low-class wops," who overheard a neighbor say, "I'd never call a nigger 'Mrs'."

There is a welcome absence of exaggeration in all this, and a real desire to push through to that basic sense of insecurity, that feeling that one's personality is unloved, unwanted, which is at the root of so much racial prejudice. The acting, especially in the parts of Joe and the minister, is sensitive and intelligent, the script is well integrated, and the motives are not unduly telescoped by the need of presenting so complex a story in less than an hour. Our only regret is that lighting, camerawork, and continuity are typically Hollywood, and show no influence of the cinema's powerful realist tradition.

However, the most important thing is that this film does not try to attribute prejudice to the nebulous causes so often assigned to it in pictures—the presence of "subversive elements" in the community, or simple accident, or a failure to share in "the American way of life." No one would identify himself as "subversive" or "un-American," and therefore these films preach only to the converted, to those who can say pharisaically, "Thank God, I am not as other men." The appeal of "Prejudice" is quite different. It gets under the skin. It tells the spectator how he too, if his job or his place in society is insecure, may seek to find a scapegoat, and fasten his personal resentments onto any group which will take a beating without being able to hit back. The problem is put up to the individual, who must face his own heart and conscience. No amount of organization and public campaigns can do good if the individual's will and motive remain untouched. This is the unmistakable lesson of the film.

"Prejudice" is now available for theatre bookings. It would do a lot of good if it were screened in every town and village throughout the country. You can help to make this possible by urging your local theatre to book it, and by putting all the force of your community groups behind the request.

—RAYMOND SPOTTISWOODE.

For information about the purchase or rental of any films, please write to Film Department, The Saturday Review, 25 West 45th St., New York 19, N. Y.

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MAY PARADE

WE POSTPONED a review of a new biography of the Maid of Orleans to May, the month when spring flowers are laid at the base of her statue in Paris and the whole Christian world pays her tribute. Thousands of American boys and girls have seen recently the Ingrid Bergman movie of Joan of Arc. If it fails to bring out all the qualities that made her great, at least it stirs in young people a desire to know more about her.

Easter came to Manhattan with brilliant sunshine and a cool wind. The crowd in the Easter Parade along Fifth Avenue was so great that it drove the indignant pigeons from the street to the trees in front of St. Patrick's Cathedral. In Central Park and along Riverside Drive the fruit trees were bouquets of pink and white. Tony Palazzo's "Susie the Cat" appeared just in time to help New York children celebrate the annual appearance of "The Greatest Show on Earth." Susie's adventures will be reviewed in the June number. In fact, so many good stories about animals have been published this spring that we intend to devote the June number exclusively to cats, dogs, horses, and birds.

The *Herald Tribune* Spring Book Festival announced the winners of its awards May 8. For the younger children the winner is "Bonnie Bess," by Alvin Tresselt, published by Lothrop. For the "middle-aged" boys and girls "Bush Holiday," by Stephen Fennimore, published by Doubleday. For the older boys and girls "Start of the Trail," by Louise Dickinson Rich, published by J. B. Lippincott.

—MARY GOULD DAVIS.

THE BELLS OF HEAVEN: The Story of Joan of Arc. By Christopher Bick. Illustrated by Lauren Ford. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co. 1949. 246 pp. $3.

INGRID BERGMAN'S "Joan of Arc" has brought to thousands of Americans a new awareness of the greatness of the Maid of Orleans. Many of them will be attracted to Bick's book, which displays on its pale blue jacket a picture of Joan on horseback, holding high her beloved banner. The young author has shown in his treatment of a well-known story a great respect for things of the spirit and a special devotion to his heroine. He portrays her first as a beautiful young girl and, later, describes the effect on her face of the inner struggle and the physical suffering. The story is true to fact and the bibliography quotes such authoritative sources as Michelet and Anatole France.

Because of the author's endeavor to give as complete a setting as possible to his story, it is slow in getting started, and occasionally lost in descriptions of places and intricate political events. The book is at its best when Joan is allowed to speak for herself. She does so simply and convincingly, stating the commands of her "voices," or expressing her desire to return to humble tasks when the Saints ask her to lead armies and to crown the King. After the coronation of Charles VII, she said to the Archbishop, "I wish now that I might return to my home in Domremy and take care of my parents' sheep." Joan appears throughout the book as one entrusted with a mission and, though frail and human, endowed with superhuman courage and wisdom. It is interesting to note that French writers have frequently emphasized Joan's patriotism and that, during the Resistance, she became again an inspiring figure. The present author, an Englishman, puts her religious mission in the foreground. The illustrations, in black and white, stress Joan's youthfulness and innocence rather than her courage and heroism.

—BLANCHE WEBER SHAFFER.

—From "The White Ring."

THE WHITE RING. By Enys Tregarthen. Edited by Elizabeth Yates. With Illustrations by Nora S. Unwin. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1949. 65 pp. $2.

WE SHOULD be grateful to Elizabeth Yates and to her publishers for presenting this Cornish fairy tale, told long ago by Enys Tregartehn and illustrated with drawings that have great distinction and beauty of design. An old fisherman, Uter Penscawen, who was really a fairy prince, found a tiny fairy baby on the moors and took her to his little cottage. He could be freed to go back to fairyland only when a fairy who lived as a mortal loved him enough to give up her inheritance and live on earth for his sake. The legend tells how he loved and guarded little Nan until she had fulfilled the fairy law of kind deeds and devotion to him and to the little native birds and beasts that the two of them cared for. The atmosphere and background of the lovely Cornish coast are so vivid that one rather regrets that old Uter is a fairy prince rather than a Cornish fisherman. Imaginative children will especially like the part where he makes Nan wash in the morning dew to shrink to fairy size, and her struggle between love for him and longing to go back to fairyland.

THE DANCING KETTLE AND OTHER JAPANESE FOLK TALES. Retold by Yoshiko Uchida. Illustrated by Richard C. Jones. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1949. 183 pp. $2.25.

AN ATTRACTIVE looking book, illustrated with black and white drawings in the Japanese style, this retells folktales some of which are familiar to American boys and girls in an earlier translation. "The Dancing Kettle," "Momotaro," and "The Tongue-Cut Sparrow" have been favorites for many years. Others are less well-known and one or two are completely unfamiliar to this reviewer. They are told simply, in an easy, flowing English that has in it a glint of humor. Atmosphere and background are subordinated to the story. This and their smooth continuity will make them a good choice for a storyteller. Because almost all of the older collections of Japanese folktales are now out of print this is

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an important book. There are fourteen stories. One, called "The Wedding of the Mouse," is the Japanese variant of the old Persian tale of "Hafiz, the Stone-Cutter."

THE SITTER WHO DIDN'T SIT. Story by Helen Walker Puner. Pictures by Roger Duvoisin. New York: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard. 1949. No paging. $1.50.

This is the first picture book, as far as we know, of that growing American institution, the baby-sitter. Mrs. Willburdrive is large, fat, and comfortable, but her "sitting" with Bill and Susan is constantly interrupted by door bells and telephone calls. She is, however, equal to the emergency. These are very amusing drawings, printed in pink, blue, and green.

THE TOTEM CASTS A SHADOW. By Margaret E. Bell. With a Frontispiece by Louis Darling. New York: William Morrow & Co. 1949. 222 *pp.* $2.50.

MRS. BELL'S "Watch for a Tall White Sail" was one of the most distinguished "young novels" of last year. In this book she goes on with the story of Florence Munroe and her family, living now in a remote part of the Alaskan coast—a part inhabited chiefly by the Haida Indians. The main theme of the story is the growing conflict between the old generation and the new. Mr. Munroe has the rather out-of-date attitude of the "superior race" toward the Indians. Gregory knows that racial barriers must be crossed. Florence is caught between the two, her emotions further complicated by her own love story. Like the first book, the background and atmosphere of the strange, lonely coast are vividly conveyed. Mrs. Bell has a way of getting into the minds and hearts of young people. There are some tense scenes in the story, and the characters are always consistent. And there is a thoroughly satisfactory ending.

The frontispiece and cover-jacket reproduce a painting of Florence, in her blue dress and long cape, standing beside the Haida totem pole with the snow-capped Northern mountains on the horizon line.

TREE OF FREEDOM. By Rebecca Caudill. Illustrated by Dorothy Bayley Morse. New York: The Viking Press. 1949. 279 *pp.* $2.50.

THIS is a story that should have a long and prosperous career. Stephanie Venable carried a seed of her apple tree from North Carolina over the mountains to Kentucky in 1786. She planted it in the good, black soil of the land that her father cleared and it sprouted and put out pale, gray-green leaves. Stephanie's tree was a symbol of a new life that the pioneers built in the Kentucky wilderness. This is the story of the Venable family's first year in that wilderness, and it is a convincing, dramatic story. There were seven in the family and all of them stand out as characters, clear cut and entirely different, one from another. There is action and near tragedy in the chronicle and there is, too, humor and a warm sense of family loyalty. As a background to the story the author paints in word pictures of the Kentucky woods in spring and summer and autumn, the birds and the wild animals, the red, muddy roads and the rich virgin soil.

—*From "Marian and Marion."*

Many readers among the older girls will remember Rebecca Caudill's first book, "Barrie & Daughter." That was a good story, and this is even better.

MARIAN AND MARION. By J. M. Selleger-Elout. Translated by Hilda Van Stockum. Illustrated by B. Midderigh-Bokhorst. New York: The Viking Press. 1949. 177 *pp.* $2.

THIS is the first translation that we have had from a successful and widely approved Dutch writer of stories for boys and girls. It tells of a young American girl who was shipwrecked on the coast of Walcheron Island not long before the Second World War. Her name was Marian and the Dutch girl who found her on the beach and helped to restore her was named Marion, although she was universally known as Janne. There is a dramatic contrast between the two girls. Marian is an artist, sensitive, intelligent, and ambitious, already partly trained as a professional dancer. Janne is sturdy and independent, quick-tempered and possessive, jealous of anyone who claimed a share in Marian's destiny. There is a contagious humor in the description of Janne's schemes to benefit the American girl and their sometimes disastrous results. In the end Marian goes to Rotterdam to continue her training, leaving Janne to console wise old Tanne, who has from the beginning understood and helped both girls. This is a well-plotted and well-told adventure story. The illustrations are most satisfying.

THE MIGHTY PEN: A Life of Thomas Paine. By Hildegarde Hawthorne. New York: Longmans, Green & Co. 1949. 239 *pp.* $2.50.

AT a time when the values of military men are stressed, and perhaps overstressed, it is a pleasure to be reminded of a man whose quill pen helped shape the destiny of nations and the upward course of all mankind. There is an amazing timeliness in the work of Thomas Paine, the intimate friend of Washington, Franklin, and Danton. Human liberty was his lifelong passion. It is threatened now as it was then, and the words he wrote more than a century and a half ago still flame in the darkness of tyranny and oppression.

He was born an English Quaker and early became a tax collector. In that capacity he saw and learned to hate the system that allowed a blood-sucking nobility to live on the poorer people. He dared to petition Parliament for reform, but got nowhere. Then he met Benjamin Franklin, who saw eye to eye with him and persuaded him to emigrate to America. Landing in America when the first Continental Congress was in session he became, on Franklin's recommendation, editor of the *Pennsylvania Magazine*. His first crusade was against Negro slavery, then the Battle of Lexington set him on fire for American liberty. In 1776 his first book, "Common Sense," called for independence, denounced the divine right of kings, and pointed out the ethical and financial benefits that would follow separation from England. Its appeal was tremendous, especially as it was written in a style that could be understood by everyday people, and it swept the country, influencing whole colonies, notably the Carolinas, to join the fight. And it did much more than was at first realized to create sympathy for America in France. Its sale was enormous, and Paine turned over all the profits to the cause.

Paine was no soldier, but he took his turn at it. As aide-de-camp to General Greene he saw at first hand how desperately low was the morale of troops and civilians. During odd moments in camp he wrote the first

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of the "Crisis" papers, giving sound reasons why all was not lost and showing the gains that would surely reward united action. It struck home everywhere. Washington had it read aloud to the troops on Christmas Eve before crossing the Delaware, and declared repeatedly that it had made victory possible. In recognition, Congress appointed Paine Secretary of Foreign Affairs. In that office he exposed the crookedness of Silas Deane and stirred up a mighty row in Congress. But he held the confidence of the majority and was appointed Clerk of the Assembly.

After the war he worked hard to keep the states together and then, naturally, plunged into a defense of the French Revolution. His "Rights of Man," published in England while he was visiting there, nearly upset the British Government. Officials incited mobs to burn the author in effigy, his books were banned, he was charged with sedition and sentenced to death—when captured. But the French revolutionaries had already made him an honorary citizen of France, so he crossed the Channel and joined the Gerondist or moderate party. As the Revolution progressed he protested its increasing violence and begged for the life of Louis. When the Jacobin party triumphed he was arrested and escaped execution by a fluke of fortune. His old enemy, Gouverneur Morris, then U. S. Minister to France, neglected to work for his release, for which he never forgave George Washington, and he was held until James Monroe succeeded Morris. On the day he was arrested he finished the first part of his last great book, the "Age of Reason." In it, among other things, he stated his religious convictions; in substance a firm belief in God and a deep hatred of established religion which was, in his opinion, a tyranny of the clergy over the lower classes. He was instantly branded as an atheist, an injustice that persists to this day in some quarters. He became the target for one of the foulest mud-slinging campaigns in all history. His last years, spent in the United States, were comparatively quiet.

This is not an exciting book, in the usual sense. The author has deliberately avoided dramatizing the episodes that might so easily have been made sensational. Such restraint and good taste are rare, and pleasant to discover in these days of raucous thrillers. It is a book with a mighty message for young readers, who will soon be "the common people"—the immensely important common people in whom Thomas Paine believed and for whom he did so much.

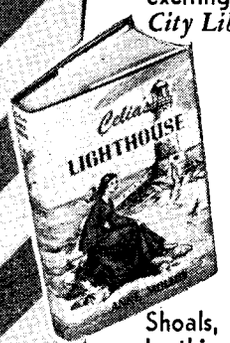
—MERRITT P. ALLEN.

For Older Boys and Girls

The Squire of Ravensmark

By Edouard Sandoz
Illustrated by the Author

This is a colorful, action-filled story about a young English squire who fights for knighthood and a fair maiden in the medieval French wars. The author, also a noted illustrator, knows the Middle Ages well and brings that robust period to life in an unusually convincing way. "I finished it, practically in one sitting because I couldn't find a good stopping place. What an exciting story it is!"—Frances Sullivan, *Wichita City Library*. Ages 10 to 14. $2.50



Celia's Lighthouse

By Anne Molloy
Illustrated by Ursula Koering

Celia Laighton Thaxter, the nineteenth century poet, spent her early years in a lighthouse on the Isles of Shoals, where her father was keeper of the light. In this warmly-told biography Anne Molloy shows how the imaginative young girl developed into a distinguished poet in this unusual setting and found happiness in marriage with her handsome tutor. A remarkably perceptive book, especially appealing to older girls. Ages 11 up. $2.50

The Story of Medicine

By Joseph Garland, M. D.
Illustrated by Erwin H. Austin

A well-known doctor and editor is the author of this fascinating and comprehensive story of medical and surgical practice from primitive times to the present. Beginning with the tribal witch doctor, Dr. Garland traces the development of medical knowledge from superstitious ignorance, through the great periods of early experiment and research, to the latest wonder drug discoveries. The book was written especially for the teen-age, but will be enjoyed also by older readers. $2.75

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BOOKED for TRAVEL

SO ROAMS THE ROSE

THERE isn't anything we'd rather hear about than a trip around the world, so we called up Billy Rose, the author, a couple of days after he flew in from a 35,000-mile junket to hell and back. "Call me next week and I'll dish with you," Mr. Rose told us over the phone. The following Thursday, before the dust of Punjab had been brushed from his shoes, the two of us were in the Ziegfeld Theatre on Sixth Avenue, dishing together like old school friends.

We located Mr. Rose in his office, an expansive living room decorated with hunter green walls and a piano upholding pictures of Bernard Baruch and Eleanor Holm Rose. Three windows bibbed with flowered draperies looked out on Sixth Avenue. Radio City stretched out of the cheap flats in the foreground. From behind a wall covered by a dark green curtain came the chatter of castinets. Alone in the meadow of a fluffy green rug was a circular table of paneled wood. Inside the horseshoe, like the newspaper slotman of an opulent dream, sat Billy Rose. What we could see of him was covered in blue-striped shirt sleeves, a gray polka dot tie, and narrow brown suspenders. Two telephones were on an auxiliary table at his right. Near the phones were a pair of miniature riding boots. One held cigarettes, the other held a lighter.

"I need publicity like a woman needs three obscenities," Mr. Rose said. After we had mustered a mountain of persuasion, however, Mr. Rose did volunteer to say that he decided to go around the world because he was tired. "After all, I was busy with a few chores. A, I operate a messy nightclub; B, I run this rather imposing theatre; C, I write the column; D, I did a five-a-week radio show; E, I wrote a book, and F, I've got a young bride."

He reached for a cigarette. "I hadn't had a real vacation for ten years, and last November I was tired." One of the phones rang. "Chester, sweetheart," Rose said, "I've been staring at a stack of mail six inches taller than I am. And we have guests coming in. While we were traipsing around the world Eleanor must have asked 200 people to stay with us. Binnie Barnes is with us now. Wonderful girl. Nothing dull about her. Chester, I'll give you a tinkle."

Mr. Rose got back to us. "The schedule we finally laid out for the trip looked something like D-day plus one. I went to a travel agent and said, 'I want to take a vacation.' He said, 'How much time have you got?' I said, 'Let's take a look at the map.' I took a red crayon and checked all the story-book cities on the planet I thought we'd like to see. It involved about 35,000 miles. First we drew up an itinerary with one- and two-day stopovers. When I showed it to Eleanor she was skeptical. So we eliminated some stops, and made an agreement not to spend less than four days or more than eight in a town."

The telephone rang and Billy told somebody he was planning to put on the aquacade at the Festival of Britain, scheduled to open in London May 1, 1951. Then he told us how he contacted Pan American, purchased a pair of tickets around the world. "It came to $6,000 or $7,000," he said. The travel agents made hotel reservations all over the world, in places like the Copacabana Palace in Rio and the Great Eastern in Calcutta. Billy added a small luxury item—a car and chauffeur to meet their plane at every airport.

"Juan Trippe then sent out a mimeographed instruction letter to every Pan American station manag to give us the visiting fireman's w come. For instance, we got off t plane at Wake Island, and the P- Am man was there. He gave us a around the island, and we had lu with him in a Quonset hut. It was t best meal of the whole trip. It ende with baked Alaska. Imagine baked Alaska on Wake Island. When we admired some sea shells some seafood was served in he said, 'I'll send you a dozen.' When we got back there were a dozen shells waiting for us. Pan American rides again."

BILLY snuffed out his cigarette and reached for another. The worst handicap for the average traveler going around the world, he said, is customs clearance. "You can waste an hour or two in customs. Your carefully packed bags can look like something thrown out of a burning building, if no one is there to vouch for you. In Rome a darling white-haired man from the travel bureau took us through customs, and we never opened our bags. In Buenos Aires Ambassador Bruce was down to meet us."

The telephone rang and Billy made arrangements to have DeWitt Wallace up for lunch. He lit another cigarette and said, "At nine out of ten spots our arrival was front-page news. Sometimes we were front page throughout the visit. Even an old hamfat like myself was bowled over."

What he called the "most endearing reception" was given the Roses at Mexico City. "We flew in at eleven o'clock at night, and as the plane taxied up we heard music. Outside there was a thirty-piece mariachi orchestra and enough flowers to take care of a fresh grave. That attracted hundreds of Mexicans. In the reception committee we found Mario Cantinflas, the Charlie Chaplin of Mexico, Jacques Gellman, the producer, and A. C. Blumenthal, an old chum buddy of mine, who came to get us with a motorcycle escort and a Government car. He put us up in a staggering suite full of flowers at his Reforma Hotel. Two days later when we got to Panama Brodie Burnham, editor of *La Nación*, met us at the airport, took us to the hotel, showed us the town, and took us to a party

Tokyo Rose plays the samisen for wife, Eleanor Holm Rose, and assorted motion-picture executives at a geisha party in the Japanese capital.

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THE BEACH AT CANNES on the blue Mediterranean, where smart people gather from all the world. The Riviera is "heaven on earth!"

ROOFS OF PARIS, from famous gourmets' rendezvous. Below, the winding Seine and, on Island, lovely Notre Dame cathedral.

FUN *in* FRANCE

The Ideal Vacation Land At All Times of Year

Where, but in France, is there combined so much to make a happy holiday? Truly, there's "never a dull moment!" Do you like sports? Take your pick, France has them all. Do you seek relaxation? Her spas and beaches are the world's finest. Sightseeing? Where will you find so much to enthrall you: lovely architecture, quaint villages, old chateaux? There's music and gayety, there's nightlife . . . there's the wondrous cooking for which France is justly famed. Prices were never more reasonable, by American standards. You'll enjoy France.

A Few Coming Events

(Write for complete summer list)

May 21 to June 6:	Paris International Fair	Paris
May 23-25:	Pilgrimage of Gypsies	Arles
June 1-30:	Music Festival	Strasbourg
June 5, etc.:	Fountain Displays	Versailles
June 3-6:	Int'l Amateur Golf	St. Cloud
June 5:	Prix de Diane (races)	Chantilly
June 6:	Pardon of the Birds	Quimperle
June 19:	Blessing of the Sea	Camaret
June 18-26:	The Grande Semaine: galas, fashion shows, openings, races, etc.	Paris
June 26:	Grand Prix (Longchamp)	Paris

For reservations and information see your friendly travel agent. For booklets, maps, etc. write Dept. S5, Box 221, New York 10

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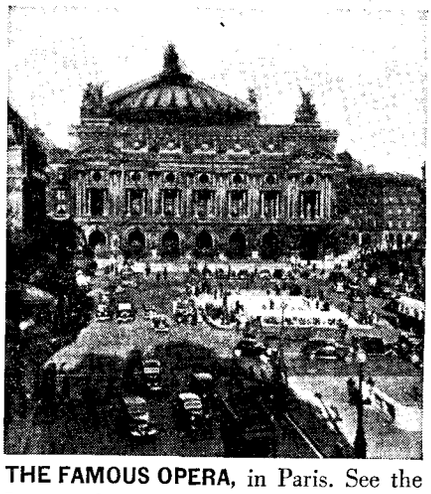

THE FAMOUS OPERA, in Paris. See the Louvre, historic sights. And shop, too! Evenings are gay and carefree in Paris.

CARCASSONNE, ancient walled town, gives a breath-taking glimpse of chivalric days. One of many lovely trips you'll never forget.

"TRAVEL BUILDS TRADE AND PROMOTES PEACE"

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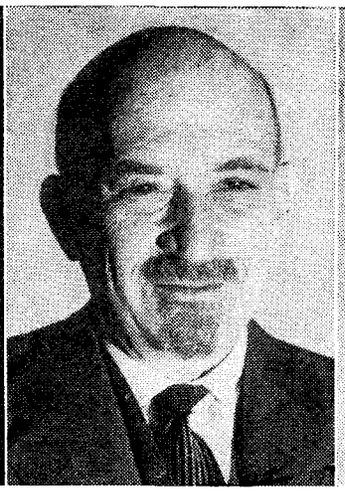
Pius XII received the Roses in Rome . . .



—*Wide World.*

Weizmann welcomed them in Israel . . .

MacArthur looked "kingly" in Tokyo...

—*Wide World.*

. . . but in New Delhi, Nehru was out of town.

given by President Diaz. Like I say, even a hamfat like Rose was touched."

Billy said that the biggest "razzle-dazzle reception" took place at Tokyo, where a hundred feet of photographers lined up to take their picture as they got out of the plane. General MacArthur had taken the 1928 Olympic Team, of which Eleanor Holm was a member, to Amsterdam. The Roses's invitation to enter Japan had come from MacArthur. In the crowd at the Tokyo airport were the heads of Japan's two largest entertainment syndicates decked out in toppers, striped pants, and morning coats. "One had come several hundred miles to meet us," Billy explained, "and they were as courteous as only representatives of a defeated nation can be."

Next day the Roses lunched with the MacArthurs. Said Billy of Doug, "He looks magnificent, beautifully dressed, almost a kingly sort of a gent. He has a head full of statistics on sports. He likes a joke, and much to my surprise he tells a pretty good story."

After lunch, following an itinerary developed by the Special Services department of the Army, the Roses attended special performances given for them at the large theatres in Tokyo. The marquees announced in electric lights the performances which the Roses were scheduled to attend. Banners were stretched across the streets reading, "Welcome Mr. and Mrs. Rose."

"It was the only town where I was received like a showman," Billy recalled somewhat remorsefully. Elsewhere he was treated as a columnist. The question he kept asking himself was how anyone in Bangkok would know anything about the column. He had written seven or eight pieces for *Collier's*, and both *Look* and the *Reader's Digest* have condensed his book. "I was suddenly a here-now writing chap and the boys were meeting me on that ground," he explained. The column is appearing in Turkish in the *Istanbul Cumhuryet* and in Portuguese in Rio's *Correa du Maña.* ("You know with the little hook over the 'n'.") It is also in the Nippon *Times,* and "Wine, Women, and Words" is being translated into Japanese. "Of course there isn't a whole lot you can do with frozen yen," he said, "except pick up knick-knacks like this." He showed us a silver cigarette case surmounted with a silver elephant in relief. "I got that for $10 in Kyoto."

Besides souvenirs Billy Rose figures he got material for three months of columns. He had a long session with the Peróns and he thinks his columns on Argentina "are going to generate a lot of fire power." "We saw the front-page characters everywhere we went, with the exception of Nehru, who wasn't in New Delhi when we arrived." The list of those who *were* in town included the Pope, and Chaim Weizmann and Ben Gurion in Israel.

"I think Israel has an excellent chance. The country shows courage, integrity. We ran into three pieces of what I call hard currency—the American dollar, the Swiss franc, and the Israeli pound, which is worth three American dollars. Nowhere in the Holy Land was I able to buy an Israeli pound for $2.98. After all, there's little behind their money besides a printing press, a dream, and a lot of soldiers who know what they're fighting for." Billy blew white smoke toward the green walls. "I'm beginning to talk like the goddam column. It's all right to write that way, but I don't want to gab that way."

Like most Americans abroad the Roses were impressed by the prestige of their Americanism. "You get pretty cocky about the strength of the American buck," is the way Mr. Rose puts it. "It has muscles, biceps. In Shanghai I asked Bud Hawks, the local Pan American man, where I could get $20 in Chinese currency to take care of tips and cabs. 'I suggest you take $5,' he told me, 'You won't get much more than that off the ground'."

The phone rang for the twelfth time by our tally, and Mr. Rose invited us downstairs to have a look at a trailer full of Babe Ruth's trophies which was going on tour for the Heart Fund. He took a quick look at the display and threw a dozen ideas at Bugs Baer, the committee chairman. A gentleman in a checkered suit and a white felt hat ambled up and stretched out his hand. "I'm Dr. Curston from Detroit," we heard the man say to Mr. Rose. "May I say hello to you. We're spending our anniversary here. We saw your show this year and last year. We enjoyed it both years, not as much this year as last year. Goodbye, sir."

Upstairs again Billy settled behind the round desk, lit a cigarette and took call No. 13. "I'll be through in ten minutes," he said into the phone, "give me another tinkle." Then he told us that for the rest of his fool life he would never let a year go by without setting aside six weeks for travel. "People ask us if we're glad to be home. No, we're not glad. For Eleanor it means keeping a house. For me it means getting back behind this pot-bellied desk with deadlines breathing down my neck. The end of the trip for us meant the end of the wackiest and most wonderful weeks we ever had. Anyway, as I said in the column, I wanted to see the world before some idiot blew it up."

The telephone tinkled. We said goodbye and headed downstairs toward the sunlight of Sixth Avenue, with a new, but unmistakable sense of urgency. —HORACE SUTTON.

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NEW EDITIONS

THE Urquhart-Motteux translation of Rabelais' great work is, like Florio's rendering of Montaigne, an enduring treasure of our literature, which can never suffer supersession, no matter how many later and more accurate English versions may come after it. But it would be affectation to pretend that the always extraordinary, and now antiquated, language and syntax of Urquhart and Motteux do not stand as somewhat prickly hedges between Rabelais and many modern readers. This is a pity, since the man who has not read Rabelais with joy, and with increasing joy through the years, has missed a unique literary experience: one of the major experiences that books have to offer. For "Gargantua and Pantagruel" is among other things—and it is a continent in which one can spend a lifetime turning up new discoveries—a huge seminal masterpiece. So to those who have been put off by that precious pair, Urquhart and Motteux, let me recommend Jacques LeClercq's remarkable modern translation of "Gargantua and Pantagruel," vivaciously illustrated by Lynd Ward (Heritage Press, $5), which was completed, for the Limited Editions Club, in 1936.

This version has all the verve, variety, gusto, pace, body, rhythmical virtuosity, and verbal extravagance of the original. No more than Urquhart and Motteux—perhaps even less than they—has M. LeClercq felt any temptation to modify Rabelais' cloacal humors and lusty obscenity; but he has followed him through fair and foul, in gravity and levity, for better or for worse. One sure proof of the excellence of this new translation is the fact that, like the French text, it is best when read aloud.

Of course, there are those who are constitutionally or piously unable to read Rabelais at all, and they deserve the commiseration of good Pantagruelians. But it is true of this author, as of others, that readers will find in him what they are fit to find. One will find only filth, another food for thoughtless laughter, while yet another will discover an anatomy of man—whole man—as he appeared, just at the junction of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, to the eyes of a unique observer and an immortal writer.

Rabelais' rough-and-tumble earthly comedy loses far less than most masterpieces in the hazardous transit of translation, but with Dante's "Divine Comedy" it is another story. Those of us who do not know Italian thoroughly can only consult one English version after another, use them to help us to pick our way through the Italian text, and then end by admitting that we still cannot claim to appreciate fully the qualities which have won Dante the place he holds in world literature. But so far as assistance can be given us, we shall find it in John D. Sinclair's translation of "The Divine Comedy" (Oxford, 3 vols., $15). Here is Dante's Italian on the verso, with Mr. Sinclair's faithful English on the recto. The explanatory notes at the end of each chapter are adequate without being too numerous. And there is another feature which gives this edition a special value: the commentaries which Mr. Sinclair has appended to every canto, and in which he has combined his own interpretations of Dante's meaning with a distillation of the best modern Dantean scholarship, much of which is not in English. Add that these three volumes measure up to the physical standards of the Oxford University Press, and I think you will agree that this is an ideal edition of "The Divine Comedy" for any reader, no matter how much or how little Italian he may have.

Turning to a great English writer—but to an inferior and disputed work—we now have the Cambridge University Press's attractive "New Shakespeare" edition of "Titus Andronicus" ($3), prepared by the indefatigable John Dover Wilson. Dr. Wilson learnedly wades his way through a sea of blood and melodramatic nonsense, and a few surprising waves of eloquence, to argue, as have others, that "Titus" is a revised version of a play by George Peele. So far so good, but when he suggests that Shakespeare wrote with his tongue in his cheek, his ground is less solid. . . . One can wash out the taste of "Titus" with Shakespeare's "Sonnets," in a rather prettified but delightfully legible edition, decorated by Valenti Angelo (Heritage Press, $5). Here is beautiful poetry for readers who care only for beauty, tough textual problems for close textual critics, and an enduring mystery for literary historians.

—BEN RAY REDMAN.

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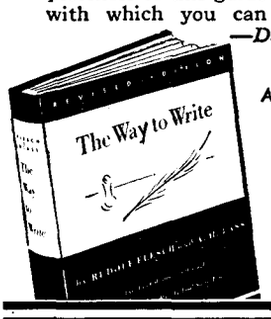

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FICTION

(*Continued from page 21*)

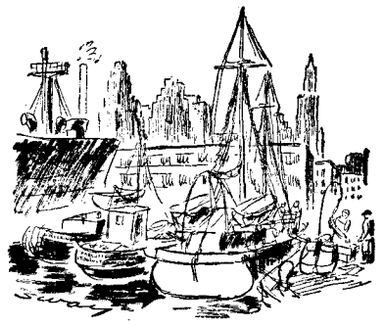
idiom, the robust humor, and the pathos of Italian town life. There are enough forceful characters and incidents about the farms, the hills, and the town of Aceto itself to fill several volumes, but each story is fascinating in itself while still making sense in the over-all pattern. From the start there is tension as the small town of Aceto slowly is carried by the landslides of the mountain above it into the precipice below. The impending disaster infects all the inhabitants with lethargy and pessimism.

Renato Fronte, a lawyer made tired and discouraged by the surrounding inequalities and poverty, extends a helping hand to those who especially need it. His house soon becomes a menage of curious and appealing characters. Among them are the beautiful Dreina, whose life is being chocked out by tuberculosis, and the pregnant and deserted Antonietta.

The poor of the town grow poorer while the rich do not know what to do with their money and their food. Ernesto, the blackmailer, tortures his tearful son with heaping platesful of macaroni and sauce as most of the other children of the town starve. To escape the poverty and general dreariness of their lives, several young people, including ex-partisans, join a band of Communists in the hills to found a new utopia. This utopia proves unworkable and degenerates into anarchy. Disillusioned by their failure, the outcast band finally wreaks a horrible revenge on the town of Aceto.

"God's Thumb Down" is especially effective as an allegory. From mayor to barber, "exceeding grievous" is the sin of Aceto's people, like their Biblical counterparts—the citizens of the city of Sodom. Both cities were like gladiatorial arenas where, in the struggle to survive, men stalked each other with hatred and fear. Thumbs down by the one presiding over the games meant death for the defeated victims. Like the angels which visited Lot, Padre Cicogna foresaw that Aceto's doom was near and that only a few blameless persons would escape.

Mr. DeLiso's writing embodies meticulous and imaginative detail, which enables the reader to come as close to experience as is possible in fiction. Despite the strong undertow of pessimism there is no invective and no sentimentality—life is recreated at both its most generous and its most brutal moments. "God's Thumb Down" is altogether a rare novel.



Family Pleasures

YOUNG MRS. SAVAGE. By D. E. Stevenson. New York: Rinehart & Co. 1949. 312 pp. $2.75.

Reviewed by NANCY GROBERG CHAIKIN

THIS pleasant little book proves that Mrs. Stevenson has had occasion to deal with children and suggests, too, that those children, whoever they were, were fortunate to have known her. Her insight is unmistakable—the *feeling into* the fragile, basically poetic mind of the child, and a wholesome nostalgic looking-backward to the places and times which are peculiarly precious to happy children. I cannot help identifying the author, though I have never met her before, with her heroine, Dinah Savage.

For Dinah, like her story, is essentially pleasant, essentially wholesome. Her attitude toward life, toward her children, toward her problems, is wholesome—and her family in the main charming. Polly, who describes peaches as "big white plums with red cheeks and flannel skins"; the twins, Mark and Nigel, so unlike one another; and Margy, that young bulk of placidity (perhaps the most likable figure)—these are the offspring of the young Widow Savage, and it is their story as well as hers that Mrs. Stevenson tells. As the five Savages and their beloved Uncle Dan (Dinah's own twin) visit the scenes of their mother's childhood, we get to know them all and the Scottish countryside and the characters who people Dinah's memories. It is in Seatown, that lovely place, that Dinah, vacationing at the home of her old Nannie, tormented by doubts about her dead husband, releases herself finally from the remembered unpleasantnesses of her first marriage and finds security with the man whom she and her brother once worshipped as a hero.

Mrs. Stevenson's story moves at a leisurely pace and features a simplicity which is at once an asset and a fault. For even as we are momentarily charmed by a glimpse of the children, and almost completely re-

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laxed in the progress of the action, our relaxation is so prolonged throughout that we are often in danger of falling asleep over this little tale. The solution to Dinah's problems, in some respects rather contrived, is not surprising enough to startle us into wakefulness; and, looking back over the story, there really does not seem to have been a climactic point at all. Beguiled, as we are, into watching those children, we are quite content to sit in the sun and watch them through half-closed eyes, dozing unconcernedly when Dinah approaches with her problems. There is not enough complexity here to challenge us into wholehearted interest, and everything dissolves at last into a pleasant mist.

There can be do doubt that Mrs. Stevenson has caught the experience of being very young, and of remembering it, and of the quick surging sense of well-being which accompanies the revisitation of childhood scenes. But this perceptiveness of hers is not quite enough to make her story notable. It is merely a refreshing encounter with some refreshing people. The most we can say for it is that, though essentially unimportant, it has captured a spirit of nostalgia and a sense of childhood which are almost certain to communicate themselves to any reader who has ever stopped to remember.

Manhunt

SHADOW OF A HERO. By Allan Chase. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. 1949. 317 pp. $3.

Reviewed by MILTON CRANE

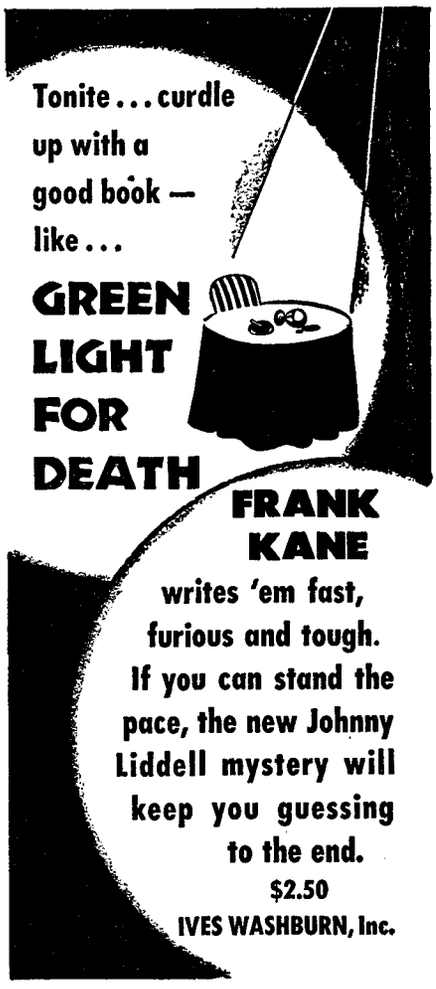
IN "Shadow of a Hero" Allan Chase has adapted to his purposes some aspects of the technique of the mystery story. As a result, his book has much of the suspense and excitement of Eric Ambler's "A Coffin for Dimitrios" (which it also resembles in other ways), but does not succeed in reaching some higher level of significance to which it appears to aspire.

Mr. Chase puts his story into the mouth of Steve Rome, book editor of a newspaper in a large American city. Steve is asked to write the obituary of one Arnold Kelleher, a high-school teacher, athletic coach, and former small-time politician, who has been blown up in his home after serving as intermediary in a kidnapping case. Tod Mullen, the local political boss, organizes a memorial meeting at which Kelleher is honored for his civic-mindedness and religious tolerance; it is at this meeting that Steve conceives a suspicion that parts of Kelleher's story remain untold. He begins, without a clear understanding of his own motives, to conduct an investi-

The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	*Crime, Place, and Sleuth*	*Summing Up*	*Verdict*
HOUSE OF STORM *Mignon G. Eberhart* (Random House: $2.50)	Distracted girl on storm-isolated Caribbean island further upset by two murders on eve of her wedding. True love triumphs.	Island constabulary gloom around but major sleuthing is done by romantically involved amateur. Not unfamiliar gambit handled with customary Eberhart eclat.	Agreeable
PLACE FOR A POISONER *E. C. R. Lorac* (Crime Club: $2.25)	Rich London invalid with hopeful heirs is shining mark for envenomer discovered by Insp. MacDonald—when he "looks the right way."	Although murderee had it coming to him, search for slayer is exciting, people interestingly venomous, and outcome always in doubt.	Good grade British
HEAD OF A TRAVELER *Nicholas Blake* (Harper: $2.50)	Corpse minus caput found near idyllic home of English poet. Nigel Strangeways investigates case and comes up with double-barreled solution.	Deft writing, considerable satire, some charming people, and general air of Gothic horror make it a winner.	Top-drawer
DROP DEAD *George Bagby* (Crime Club: $2.25)	Respected Insp. Schmidt of Manhattan Homicide Squad plods sturdily to solution of induced precipitation that extinguished apt.-house chatelaine.	Yarn intimates that nobody loves landladies—which doesn't prevent some slick Schmidt sleuthing and amusing antics by large and effervescent cast.	Standard Bagby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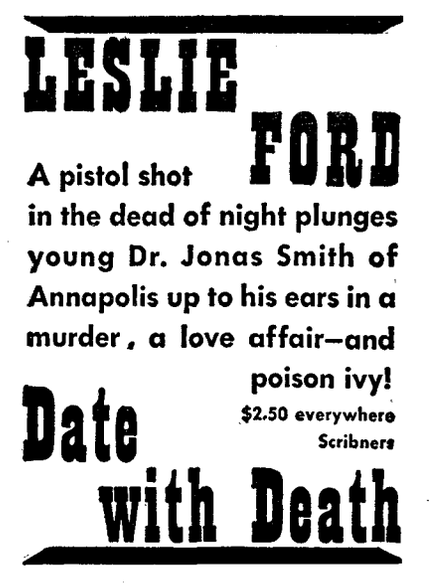
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gation the probable results of which already worry him.

Among the men he consults is Rivers, a former chief inspector of police, who tells Steve how he was railroaded out of the force by Kelleher. Irregularities in Kelleher's school record also are revealed, including a carefully suppressed story about the hero's sexual adventure with a young student. And ultimately Steve learns from the retired politician Paddy Hearn the whole unpleasant story of Kelleher's history as wardheeler and alderman. By this time Steve has joined forces with an attractive (and, of course, mysterious) young professor of sociology, Joan Bardosi. All the while he is tormented by a disquieting half-memory of Kelleher, whom he finally identifies as the violently anti-Semitic coach of a high-school baseball team.

Once Steve's suspicions have been partially confirmed, the rest of the story unrolls with ever-increasing speed to a whirlwind climax.

What keeps "Shadow of a Hero" from being an entirely satisfactory novel in spite of its hard, efficient, economical writing is perhaps apparent in the foregoing summary. Here is a book that seems to treat a problem of weight and moment: how does a man of clearly dangerous and anti-democratic sentiments arrive at a political position of relative power in American life? If this were the problem which Steve Rome attempted to solve in unraveling the thread of Kelleher's career, the book might achieve that sense of serious purpose which obviously moves Mr. Chase. The actual effect of the work, however, is that of a slick, well contrived pursuit story. As in Ambler's "A Coffin for Dimitrios," the personality of the supposedly dead villain is skilfully reconstructed by an investigator, who learns, as the climax of his researches, that the object of his study is alive and deadly. The pattern is here disconcertingly complicated by the addition of an element of social significance, which one does not know precisely how to take.

"Shadow of a Hero," in spite of its evident virtues, remains little more than an entertaining thriller.

Survivor

By Louise Townsend Nicholl

DAISY and clover
Deep in the summer field wholly were spent,
But for the golden rod dying is different,
Left in the autumn field far into frost,
Matted in silver,
And standing, and lost.

The New Recordings

COMPOSITION, PERFORMER, ALBUM NUMBER, NUMBER OF RECORDS	ENGINEERING *Recording Technique, Surface*	PERFORMANCE AND CONTENT
SCRIABIN, BARTOK, PROKOFIEFF		
SCRIABIN: POEME D'EXTASE (1909). San Francisco Symph., Monteux. RCA Victor DM 1270 (2)	RCA's San Francisco recording continues excellent. A fine depth, live, but clear as to detail.	There's much to-do o[illegible] the romantic mysticism of this—I find it astonishingly close to the Stravinsky of "Firebird" (1910), "Rossignol" (1908-14). Same tritonal harmony. But this is almost hysterically taut, repetitious.
BARTOK: VIOLIN SONATA #1 (1921). Menuhin; Adolph Baller. RCA Victor DM 1286 (4). *See also*: SONATA #2. Tossy Spivakowsky; Artur Balsam. Concert Hall AA (3 *pl.*)	Violin is prominent, piano somewhat in background but tonally excellent. Concert Hall's Sonata #2 has better balance, more piano.	Another early Bartók, moody, potently dissonant; not easy, but fine stuff if you are ready for it. Menuhin does a noble job but somehow the music outruns him; Spivakowsky is more at home in the similar Second Sonata.
BARTOK: CONCERTO FOR ORCHESTRA (1943). Amsterdam Concertgebouw, Van Beinum. Decca ffrr EDA 105 (5)	Top-quality ffrr, with usual big liveness, sharp highs. I prefer Columbia's recording, though, with its closer instrumental solos—a feature of this work throughout.	Too soon to say if this or the recent Reiner-Pittsburgh Columbia version is better; both are gorgeous recordings, good performances. This one is occasionally a bit stolid, I'd say. A big piece, easy listening.
PROKOFIEFF: SYMPHONY #1 ("Classical"). Paris Conservatory Orch., Munch. Decca ffrr EDA 107 (2)	Details are clear—yet this is really too live and resonant for such unassuming, chamber-style music.	I prefer this, as I did the recent Ormandy-Phila. version, to the high-speed Koussevitzky-Boston recording.
MOZART		
MOZART: VIOLIN SONATA #8 IN C, K. 296. Jascha Heifetz, Emanuel Bay. RCA Victor DM 1290 (2)	Much of it rather low in level, balance is good, acoustics excellent; intimate, close, but not dead.	Compare with Schneider-Kirkpatrick version (harpsichord). Both are good. Heifetz is smoother but slithers occasionally.
MOZART: PIANO CONCERTO #9 IN E FLAT, K. 271. Gaby Casadesus; Lamoureux Orch., Rosenthal. Vox 650 (4)	Good piano recording; the whole rather on the dead side. Highs are very moderate.	Fast mvts. of this top Mozart aren't quite Gaby's meat. The superb slow movement she does more warmly—it's worth the whole album easily.
MOZART: QUARTET IN C ("DISSONANT"), K. 465. Griller Quartet. Decca ffrr EDA 97 (4)	The roomy sharpness of ffrr applied to the quartet. Somehow it lacks body compared to the all-time standard of the prewar (Victor) Budapest.	The Grillers, in Mozart, are not quite up to the old Budapests—which leaves them nevertheless very near the top.
BEETHOVEN: FANTASIA IN G MINOR, OP. 77; SONATA IN F SHARP MINOR, OP. 78. Rudolf Serkin, piano. Columbia MM 815 (3) *LP*: ML 4128 (½)	Quite good piano, though I've heard better. Serkin's energy is so tremendous that almost any recording would suffice!	A most interesting work, cross betw. Bach and Mozart fantasias. Clearly the sonata was intended to follow immediately as here (though notes don't say so). Excellent idea. LP includes "Ghost" trio.

—EDWARD TATNALL CANBY.

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the Phoenix Nest

THE ANSWERING IMAGE

TIPS which thirst is parching
Part to drink their fill;
Listening ears hear marching
Just beyond the hill.

Hungry eyes discover,
Where the seagulls skim,
Islands peering over
The horizon's rim.

Blind presumption forces
Laws of time and place,
Calls stars from their courses
To the heart's embrace.

—MARGUERITE STEVENS FOSTER.

* * *

On March 5 I discussed old anthologies of undergraduate verse, some from Oxford University in England. I wondered as to the identity of a certain L. Gielgud. Now Terence Bond, of Great Neck, sends me a postal card saying:

> It would seem that your "L. Gielgud" of Magdalen College is now Lt. Col. Lewis Gielgud, O. B. E., and always has been the elder brother of Val (of the BBC) and John. He was actively concerned with the Red Cross (finally becoming Under-Secretary-General) and has written several books and radio plays. He is six years older than Val, ten than John.

I also quoted a poem by one Chaman Lall, of Jesus, a peculiar poem that liked me well. Mark Starr, educational director of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union of the American Federation of Labor, writes me:

> Could this person be a Hindu who went back to India and became prominent in the Indian labor movement? I met him many years ago in London and it is an unusual name.

It is quite probable.

Louise C. (Mrs. Thomas M. H.) Blair, of Kent, Ohio, sends me this further information on the late Kerr Rainsford:

> Unless there were two Kerr Rainsfords, Mrs. Norman W. Ward is in error in the NEST of Feb. 26 and not *you* in the NEST of Jan. 15. Mrs. Ward states that Mr. Rainsford, author of "Harold of England" and "The Maid of Orleans," had "nothing to do with the Carnegie School of Technology." I distinctly remember Mr. Rainsford when I was an art student at the Carnegie Institute of Technology, and, in order to verify your statement and my conviction, I quote this from the list of faculty members as it appears in the 1921 issue of the college year book, "The Thistle":
>
> "Walter Kerr Rainsford, A.B., Head of Department of Architecture.
> "A.B., Harvard, 1904; Ecole des Beaux Arts, Paris, 1912."

* * *

I think that it would be quite just
To biff the man who says "a must."

—I. C. BROWN.

* * *

People send me postcards of various kinds. Here are two:

> 12 April, and under a huddle of chores and miniscula bouffes. What a grand trip you had, but horrified you didn't recognize hibiscus & bougainvillea. Gosh! Just walking in the garden, in a parterre of daffodils, bethought:
>
> **WASP IN YOUR BOSOM**
>
> Among life's queerest insect things
> (Some with legs and some with wings)
> Only the poet both stings and sings.
>
> —DOVE DULCET,
> UOMO QUALUNQUE.

The next one is this:

> I came across your comment on Brian Hooker. How can you say he missed the boat? If he is the same who translated "Cyrano," he will always be one of our favorite people. It is impossible to read any other translation after being familiar with that one, and most of it *is* sheer poetry. With all due credit to Rostand, "Cyrano" to the Scotts means Hooker, much as Omar Khayyam means Fitzgerald.
>
> —MARY LOU BRUCE SCOTT.

Yes, Mary Lou, it *was* the same Hooker, and the same who wrote "Mona," a grand opera with music by Horatio Parker, of Yale. As an old Eli, Hooker's reputation is now fabulous at that institution of learning for the ribald songs he composed as an undergraduate. But only Alfred Noyes and I remember his poems, which appeared in 1915, though his "Ballade of the Dreamland Rose" would adorn any anthology of lighter verse. And a little poem called "Echoes," beginning

In the old room, when May is ending,
And day descending in the West,
Into a golden stillness blending
My memories of worst and best,

has haunted me for years because of its effortless music. A relief from all the desperate striving to be clever of these harried and hurried days! I had said that Hooker's stories just "missed the boat," because he was writing medieval things just before Cabell; and a greater than he, Maurice Hewlett, published "The Queen's Quair" (And so's the King, remarked a Celtic jester of that period!) in 1904. A chapter in literary history could be written on the good writers who, merely because of a trick of the Time-Spirit, just escaped acclaim for a certain kind of thing, because their work came either too early or too late.

* * *

FABLE FOR REALISTS

At noon the harsh reality
Of things is hard to bear.
The crevice of a mountain cuts
The mind with whetted glare.
In seasons when the folded light
On shelves of shadow lies,
The few who shun the barren fact
See more than it supplies.
The poet free from intervention
Surveys a fertile new dimension.

—IRENE WILDE.

* * *

It is a pleasure for me to recommend to you "A Cycle of the West," by John G. Neihardt, from the Macmillan Co., which will not be reviewed in the *SRL* because its component parts have already, from time to time, been reviewed separately. This is a real and vital epic of the Western lands which includes: "The Song of Hugh Glass" (1915), "The Song of the Three Friends" (1919), "The Song of the Indian Wars" (1925), "The Song of the Messiah" (1935), and "The Song of Jed Smith" (1941). You should now read the saga in its entirety! The end papers of the book are furnished with an excellent map. Neihardt first knew Indians on the old Omaha Reservation. In his youth he was a brilliant poet and short-story writer. He descended the Missouri from its headwaters in a light boat. He has searched all available historical records. He is now poet in residence and lecturer in English at the University of Missouri. Few men of our time, not actual survivors, know the early West better than he; and his verse is spirited.

—WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT.

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(Continued from page 48)

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(Continued from page 49)

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ATTRACTIVE, YOUNG MALE, BA, desires interesting, fabulous, exotic position. Interested people, theatre, travel. Box 549-H.

INTERESTING JOB for college student with literary background for correspondence work; about 6 hours a week for $1. per hour. Box 550-H.

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DOUBLE-CROSTIC No. 791

Reg. U. S. Patent Office

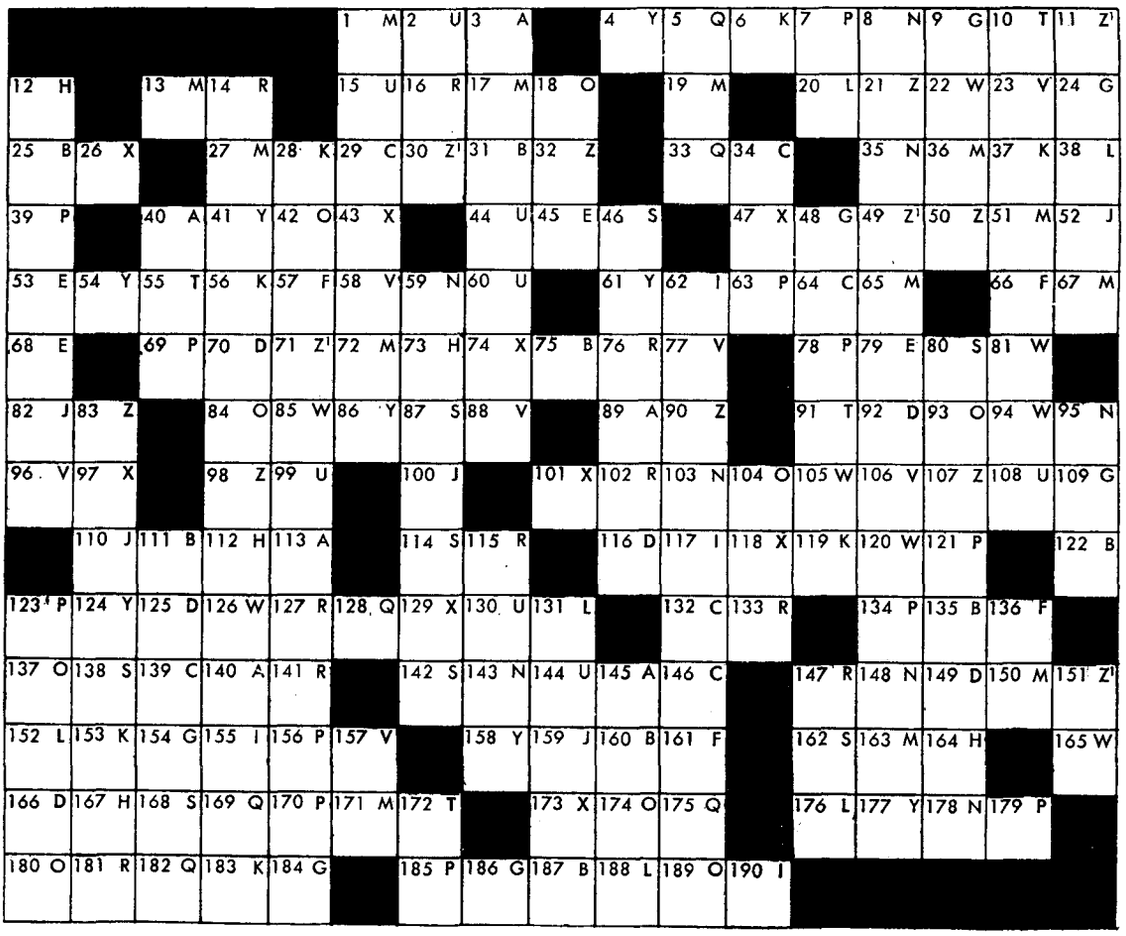
By Elizabeth S. Kingsley

DEFINITIONS	WORDS
A. American painter and sculptor (1885-).	40 89 140 113 145 3
B. American novelist whose pseudonym was Ik Marvel.	122 111 160 25 187 75 31 135
C. Novel by Charles Brockden Brown, 1799.	132 29 64 34 139 146
D. Present U. S. state concerned in the Northwest Boundary Dispute.	70 166 92 116 125 149
E. Lake among the Alban Hills, Italy.	45 68 53 79
F. An isolated peak rising abruptly (Newfoundland).	66 161 136 57
G. What John Huss was accused of being when burned at the stake, 1415.	9 184 154 24 109 48 186
H. King of Moab, slain by Ehud, who thus released Israel (Bib.).	164 12 73 167 112
I. Author of "The Man Without a Country."	117 155 190 62
J. A greenhorn or simpleton (So. Africa).	52 110 82 159 100
K. Droplike.	37 6 183 153 56 119 28
L. God of sleep, identified with Somnus (Gr. myth.).	38 176 20 152 188 131
M. Pertaining to or devoted to useful learning.	150 163 51 171 65 1 13 27 19 72 67 36 17
N. Of questionable taste (2 wds.; slang).	143 103 35 8 59 95 148 178
O. Rids oneself of (2 wds.).	93 18 42 137 174 180 189 84 104
P. Accepts as trustworthy (3 wds.; slang).	156 134 78 63 185 170 39 121 69 179 123 7
Q. Indian tribe of which Pontiac was chieftain.	169 33 128 5 175 182
R. Boxing.	14 127 141 181 102 147 16 133 115 76
S. An extinct form of man, also called Dawn Man (Anthropol.).	168 138 87 162 46 114 142 80
T. Wife of Odin and mother of Vali (Norse myth.).	91 10 55 172
U. Babylonian Kingdom of 2000-1800 B. C., recently in the news for its price-controls.	130 15 2 99 144 60 108 44
V. Extremely nervous (U. S. slang).	23 58 96 77 157 106 88
W. Eradicated.	94 165 126 22 85 120 105 81
X. Not agreeing.	47 74 43 97 129 101 118 173 26
Y. State admitted to the Union, Dec. 3, 1818.	41 4 86 54 124 177 158 61
Z. To convert into chalk.	50 21 107 90 98 83 32
Z.[1] An important German city in the Rhine province, Prussia.	30 49 71 151 11

DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle you must guess twenty-odd words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. The key letters in the squares are for convenience, indicating to which word in the definitions each letter in the diagram belongs. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square of the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Read up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Authority for spelling and definitions is Webster's New International Dictionary (second edition).



MAY 21, 1949

Solution of last week's Double-Crostic will be found on page 5 of this issue.

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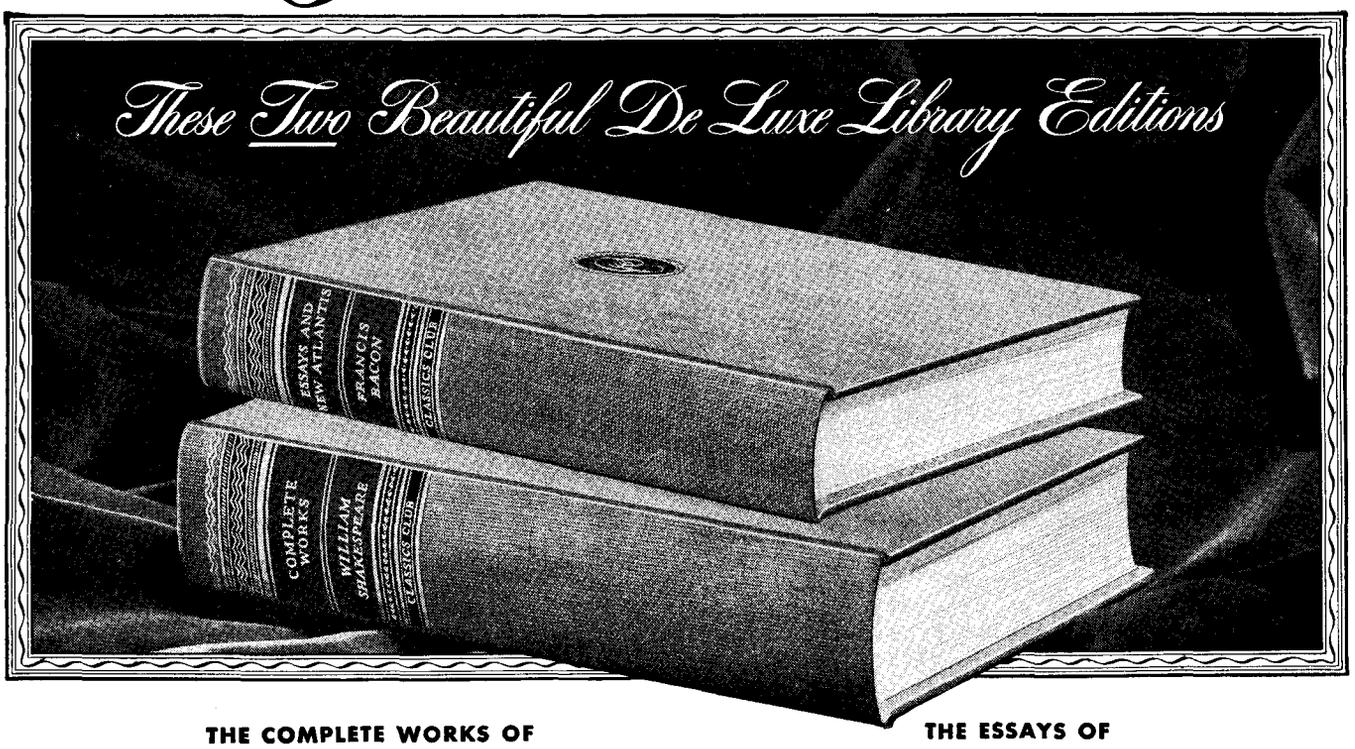

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